the PARIS REVIEW

24

BORIS PASTERNAK

and

ROBERT FROST

two interviews

LEONOR FINI

a portfolio

GINA BERRIAULT

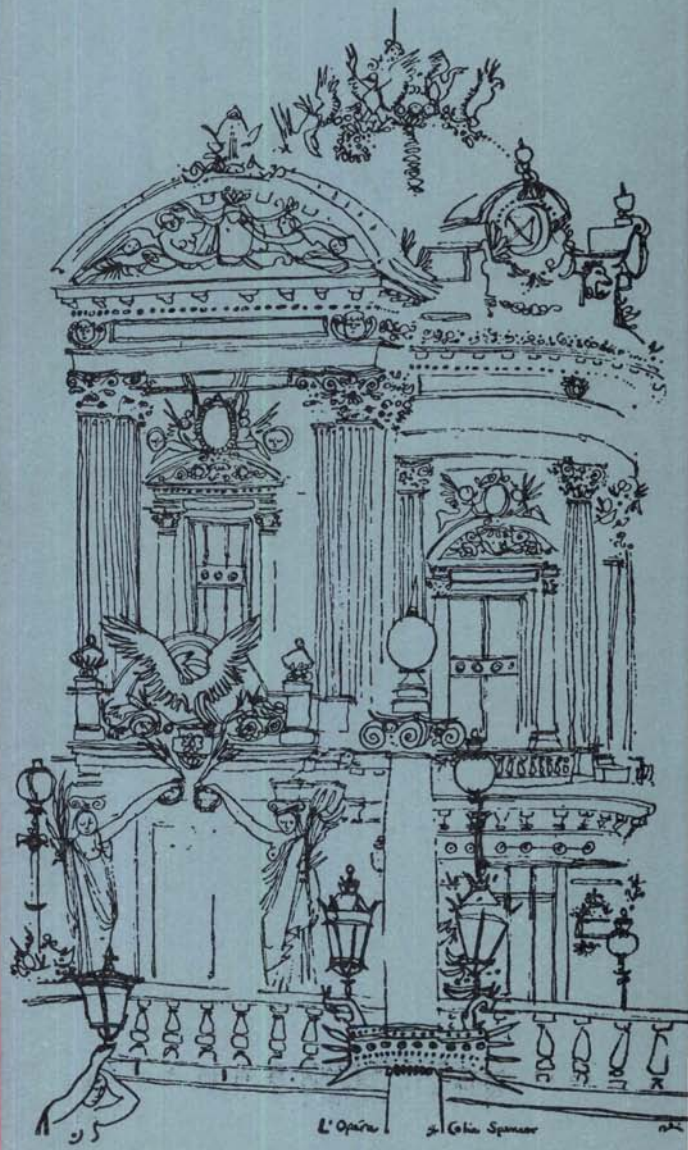
THOM GUNN

POETRY

SHORT STORIES

$1.00 4s in U.K.

4 NF



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KLM C'EST MAGNI FIQUE

KLM *is* magnificent, because aboard every flight – whether Economy or First Class – you get the highest standards of service you'll find anywhere. The kind of service that makes you want to travel more often. Fly KLM to Europe . . . and beyond! Non-stop across the Atlantic on the Royal 8 Jet. Service in Europe on jet-powered aircraft to every major European city. Tax-free shopping in Amsterdam. See your travel agent or contact your nearest KLM office. KLM, 609 Fifth Avenue, New York 17 – PLaza 9-2400.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new and noteworthy from Dutton Everyman Paperbacks

A WREATH OF ROSES

Elizabeth Taylor. A sensitive, suspenseful novel of the drama that develops from the infinitely subtle workings of the human spirit. "Mrs. Taylor's novel stands proudly apart... her prose shimmers and her untroubled skill enchants us." – *Yale Review*

D 58 **$1.35**

THE PRODIGAL

Jack Richardson. A 1960 off-Broadway hit, this brilliant modern version of the Orestes legend was hailed by Walter Kerr as "a permanent contribution to the contemporary theatre."

D 59 **$1.35**

THE LETTERS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI

Edited by **Marion D. Frankfurter** and **Gardner Jackson.** One of the 20th-century's great personal documents, this volume is famous for the splendor of its prose. Includes a résumé of the case and the statements to the court.

D 62 **$1.85**

SIGHT AND INSIGHT

Alexander Eliot. *Time's* former art editor combines criticism with philosophy in an interpretation of great art masterpieces. "Its refreshing viewpoint and ripe judgment are infinitely preferable [to] the huge tomes which popularizers have ground out on art." – John Barkham

D 65 **$1.25**

AND EVEN NOW and A CHRISTMAS GARLAND

Max Beerbohm. Two books which show "the incomparable Max" at his incomparable best; satirical essays and the incredible group of famous-author parodies. "Beside its glow and magic the other essayists pale into insignificance," – *The New York Times*

D 68 **$1.85**

A NEW YEAR'S TALE

Vladimir Dudintsev. This distinguished Soviet author's inspiring fable for adults is a powerful denunciation of materialism and a moving plea for freedom of thought and action for all peoples.

D 69 **95c**

Write for free complete list of Everyman Paperbacks to:

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

300 Park Ave. So., New York 10, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Twentieth Century Parody

AMERICAN AND BRITISH

Edited by Burling Lowery

with an introduction by Nathaniel Benchley

A delightful anthology of parody with some of the most famous authors of our time as victims and some of our most devastating humorists and critics as their literary executioners.
Among the parodied: James Joyce, Winston Churchill, Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, T. S. Eliot, Rudyard Kipling, Jack Kerouac, and William Faulkner.
Among the parodists: Max Beerbohm, Cornelia Otis Skinner, E. B. White, Gilbert Highet, Peter De Vries, Robert Benchley, Edmund Wilson, James Thurber. $5.75

The Human Season

By Edward Lewis Wallant

"The appearance of a new writer whose viewpoint is mature and who knows how to say exactly what he means is something of a literary event. Author Wallant, 34, is such a writer. His first book deals skillfully with an unlikely subject—the grief of a 59-year-old plumber after the sudden death of his wife...
"Wallant's book is a tour de force; what might seem a hopeless tale impresses by the clarity of its compassion." – *Time Magazine*
"A literary achievement that is as fine an affirmation of life as anything since *A Death in the Family*," – *Library Journal* $3.75

Tale for the Bluebird

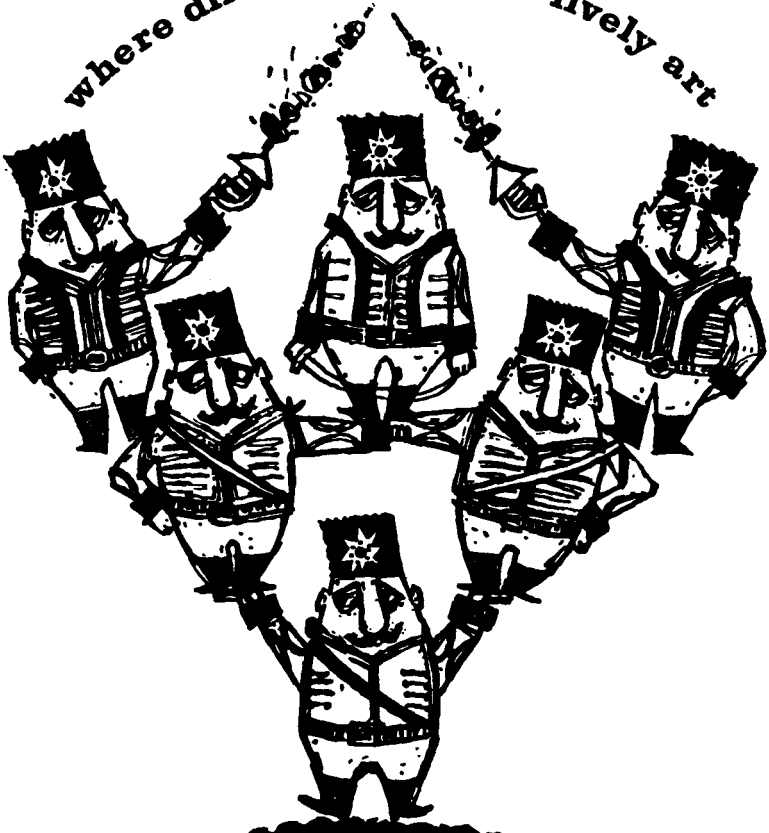
By Gerald Weales

An exhilarating journey takes the hero of this satiric, picaresque tale from one end of the U.S. to the other, and involves him with a doctor of souls, a San Francisco millionaire, a lovable salesman, an academe on the make, a charming lady of the Deep South, and almost every other indigenous American you can think of. A gay, exhuberant novel that can be read strictly for fun, this is also a deft satire on American life. "It is a satirical fantasy about us, done with wit, taste, and a lightness of touch that is essential but rarely to be found." – Harvey Swados. Mr. Weales's writing has appeared previously in *The Atlantic*, *The Reporter*, *Commentary*, and other magazines. $3.95

At all bookstores HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where dining is the 8th lively art



Russian Tea Room

150 W. 57 ST. NEW YORK CITY

NEXT TO CARNEGIE HALL • CO 5-0947

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

6 latest CAPRICORN BOOKS

ANTE-BELLUM Three Classic Writings on Slavery in the Old South
Edited by HARVEY WISH CAP. 31 $1.35 (Hardcover) $2.50

THE PALACE OF PLEASURE
An Anthology of the Novella
Edited by MAURICE VALENCY and HARRY LEVTOW CAP. 32 $1.35 (Hardcover) $2.50

THE PROBLEM CHILD
By ALFRED ADLER CAP. 33 $1.35 (Hardcover) $2.50

THE FREMANTLE DIARY
The South at War. Edited by WALTER LORD CAP. 34 $1.35

4 MODERN FRENCH COMEDIES
Jarry, Courteline, Adamov, Ayme
Introduction by WALLACE FOWLIE CAP. 35 $1.35

ELIZABETHAN LYRICS
Edited by NORMAN AULT CAP. 37 $1.75

THE AGE OF THE DESPOTS
By JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS CAP. 38 $1.65

MISTRESS MASHAM'S REPOSE. By T. H. WHITE CAP. 39 $1.25

CHIN P'ING MEI Hsi Men and His Six Wives CAPRICORN GIANT 203. $2.45

HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC PEOPLES By CARL BROCKELMANN CAPRICORN GIANT 204. $1.95

At all bookstores

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, N. Y. 16

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ACADEMIE DU VIN DE BORDEAUX

1, Cours du XXX Juillet

BORDEAUX FRANCE

The ambition of the BORDEAUX WINE ACADEMY is the defense and illustration of the old and well deserved reputation of the great wines of Bordeaux, and the respect of the traditions by which this high standard of quality was obtained.

Its members are representatives from the fields of Wine, Literature, and the Fine Arts.

It provides information and documents about the leading Chateaux in the Gironde.

It publishes every year a "Vintage Chart" which is the most impartial and accurate statement on this subject.

The vineyards associated with the Academy are:

GRAVES: CH. HAUT-BRION, Bouscaut, Carbonnieux, Domaine de Chevalier, Haut-Bailly, La Tour Martillac, Malartic la Gravière.

MEDOC: CH. LAFITE-ROTHSCHILD, MARGAUX, LATOUR, MOUTON-ROTHSCHILD, Leoville-las-Cases, Pichon Longueville Baron, Cos d'Estournel, Palmer, Calon-Segur, Beychevelle, Grand-Puy-Ducasse.

POMEROL: CH. PETRUS, La Fleur Petrus, La Conseillante, Petit Village, Trotanoy.

SAINT-EMILION: CH. AUSONE, CHEVAL-BLANC, Canon, La Gaffeliere-Naudes, Figeac, La Magdelaine, Larcis-Ducasse.

SAUTERNES-BARSAC: CH. D'YQUEM, La Tour Blanche, Coutet, Climens.

And also: Ch. Mouton Baron Philippe, Gloria, Lanessan, Maucaillou (Medoc) Tertre-Daugay, Monbousquet (St. Emilion).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New VINTAGE BOOKS

ADVENTURES OF THE MIND
Edited by Richard Thruelson and John Kobler. $1.25
ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOLK RELIGION
Edited by Charles Leslie. $1.65
CHARLEMAGNE
From the Hammer to the Cross
By Richard Winston. $1.25
WAGNER AS MAN AND ARTIST
By Ernest Newman. $1.65
THE SHAPE OF CONTENT
By Ben Shahn. $1.10

New in the Vintage Russian Library

THE SOVIETS IN WORLD AFFAIRS
By Louis Fischer. $1.85
YEARS OF CHILDHOOD
By Sergey Aksakdov. $1.65
EARLY JOYS, a novel
By Konstantin Fedin. $1.65
PAN-SLAVISM, Its History and Ideology
By Hans Kohn. $1.85
THE VINTAGE TURGENEV, 2 Volumes.
$1.65 each

Distributed by ALFRED A. KNOPF, Inc.

New **Modern Library Paperbacks**

THE SONG OF IGOR'S CAMPAIGN
Translated by Vladimir Nabokov. 95¢
COMMUNITAS
By Paul and Percival Goodman. $1.25
MUSIC FOR THE
MAN WHO ENJOYS HAMLET
By Bernard Haggin. 95¢
LIFE STUDIES
By Robert Lowell. 95¢
MAN IN MODERN FICTION
By Edmund Fuller. 95¢
THE COMPLETE PLAYS OF
JOHN M. SYNGE. *$1.25*
THE UNITED STATES
IN WORLD AFFAIRS (1959)
By Richard P. Stebbins. $1.45
TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD
By John Reed. $1.25

Now at your bookstore ***RANDOM HOUSE***

Lawrence Durrell

COLLECTED POEMS

"Durrell's poetry compels the highest standard of judgement... The effect of reading him is to have one's love of poetry rekindled." -

JOHN WAIN, SPECTATOR.

Price 21/—

FABER & FABER LTD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PARIS REVIEW

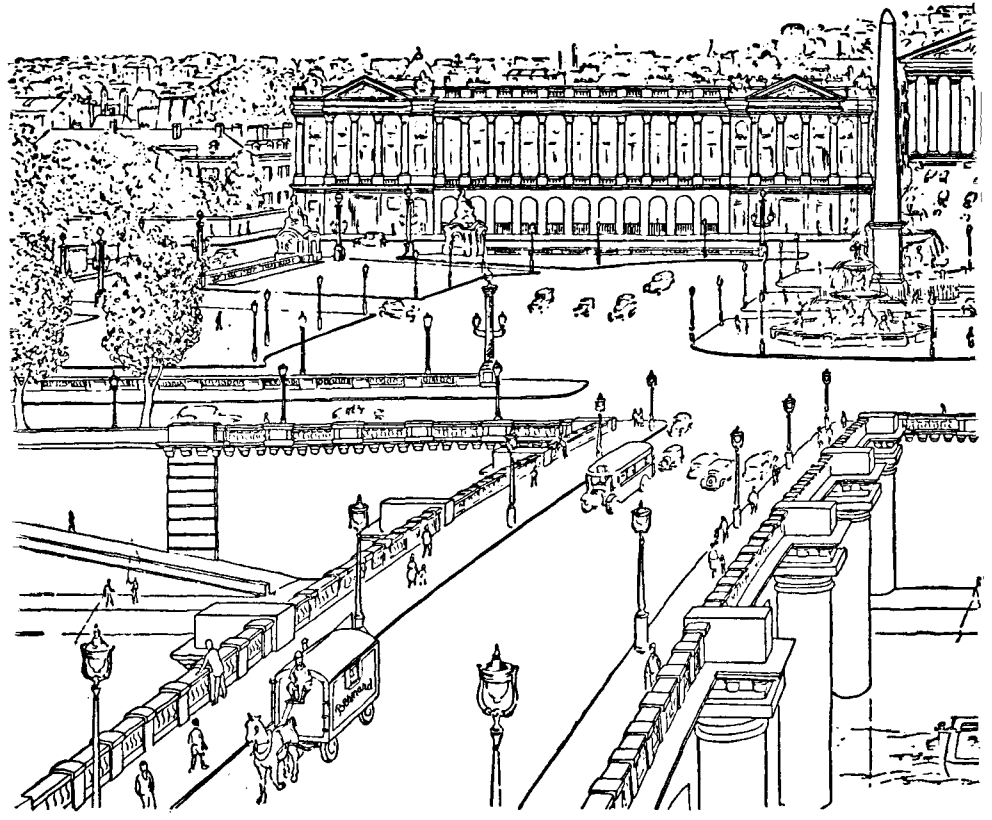
Publisher	SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN
Editors	GEORGE A. PLIMPTON, PETER MATTHIESSEN, DONALD HALL, ROBERT B. SILVERS, BLAIR FULLER
Managing Editor	JOHN P. C. TRAIN
Assistant Managing Editor	GENE ANDREWSKI
Paris Editor	NELSON W. ALDRICH Jr.
Assistant Paris Editor	JOAN MOSELEY
Editorial Assistants	JILL FOX, GILLIAN GOLDSMITH, ANN KADINSKY-CADE, LILLIAN VON NICKERN, ROSE STYRON, SABINA HOLZKA
Advisory Editors	THOMAS H. GUINZBURG, HAROLD L. HUMES, BEN JOHNSON, ARCHIBALD MACLEISH, JOHN PHILLIPS, MAX STEELE, WILLIAM STYRON, FRANCIS WYNDHAM

The Paris Review is published by The Paris Review, Société à Responsabilité Limitée au capital de 5,000 NF; 1 dollar, 4s, 4 NF a copy; 3 dollars, 16 NF, or 16s and 2s 8d postage for four copies. For payment in sterling from countries outside the United Kingdom: 4s per copy plus 5d postage or 16s for four copies plus 1s 8d. For payment in nouveaux francs in non-European countries: 20 NF for four copies. Vol. 6, N° 24. Numéro de presse 26.295. Summer Fall 1960. Publication office, 16, rue Vernet, Paris 8e, France. Editorial and distribution offices, 45-39 171 Place, Flushing 58, N.Y. Representative in England and exclusive distributor in all countries except France, the U.S.A. and Israel, André Deutsch Ltd., 12-14 Carlisle St., Soho Square, London W. 1. Distributed in the U.S.A. by the Eastern News Company and Random House Inc. Official representation of the Paris Review Inc. of New York in France, Société Tourvoy, 16 rue Vernet, Paris 8e. Printed in the Netherlands by N.V. Drukkerij G. J. Thieme, Nijmegen.

All fiction manuscripts from the U.S.A. should be submitted to the New York editorial offices; all poetry manuscripts from the U.S.A. to Donald Hall, c/o the New York editorial offices. No responsibility can be taken for manuscripts not accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes (or by International Postage coupons, available at any post-office).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PARIS

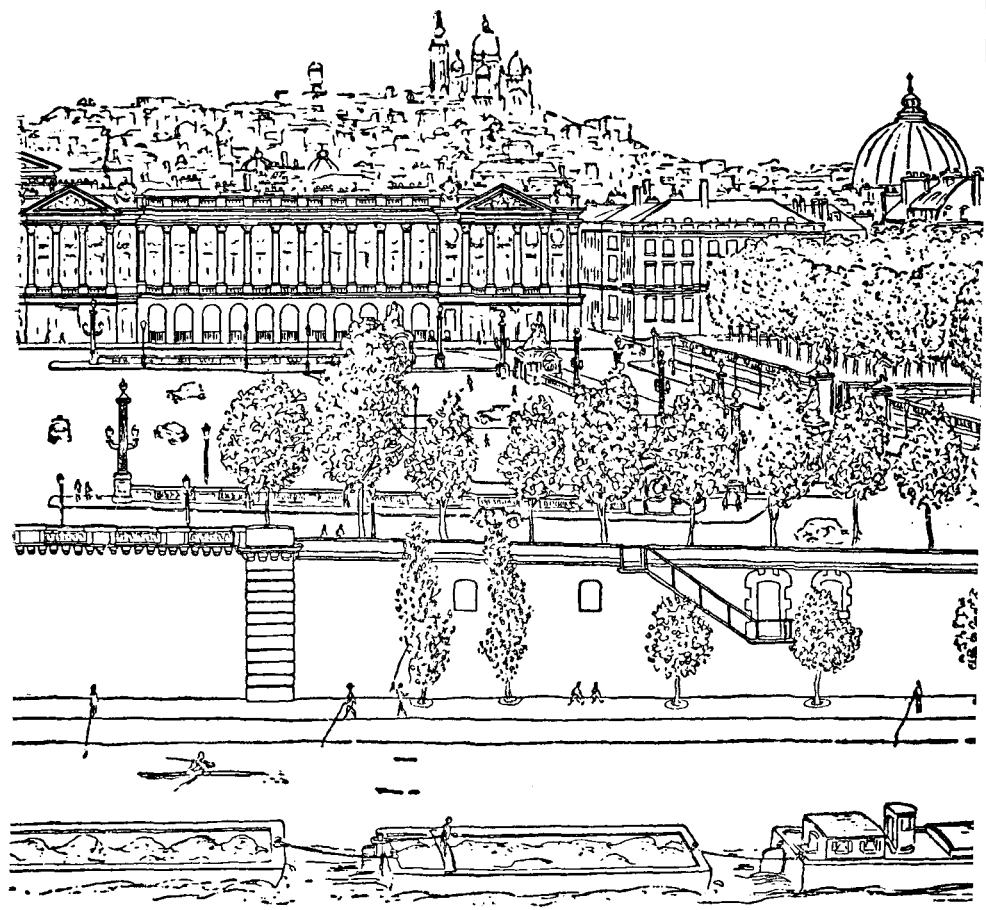


16, RUE VERN

André Deutsch Ltd *45-39*
12-14 Carlisle St · Soho Square · London *Flushi*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REVIEW

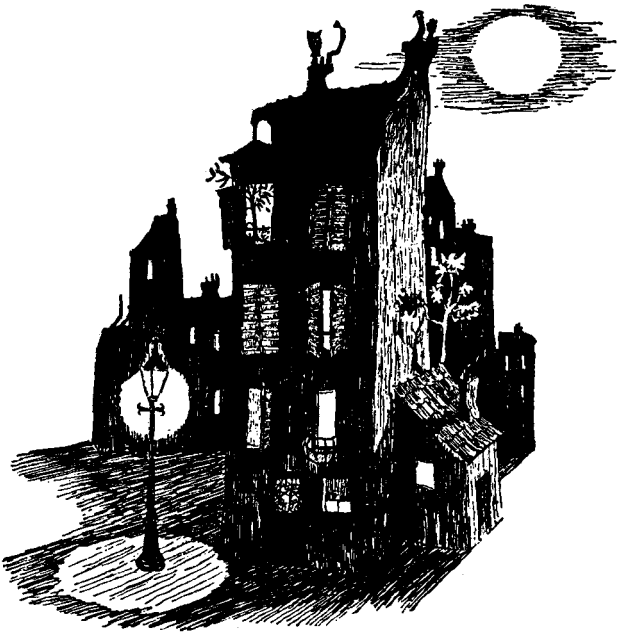


E T, P A R I S, 8 e

' Place
58, New York

Random House Inc.
457 Madison Ave. New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR

FICTION

Gina Berriault	*The Bystander*	**12**
Thomas Whitbread	*The Rememberer*	**24**
Jan Gerhard Toonder	*The Time We Will*	**72**
Elizabeth Savage	*Victoria*	**124**

INTERVIEWS

Boris Pasternak	*The Art of Fiction XXV*	**42**
Robert Frost	*The Art of Poetry II*	**88**

PORTFOLIO

Leonor Fini	*8 Drawings*	**80**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POETRY

John Pauker	*In Solitary*	12
Lewis Turco	*Narcissus to His Fleshly Shade*	23
X. J. Kennedy	*Faces From A Bestiary*	70
Lee Gerlach	*Earth and Air*	70
Peter Levi S.J.	*Two Poems*	42
Thom Gunn	*With Good Humor*	79
Arthur Boyars	*Second Canto*	121
Christopher Middleton	*Poems from "Herman Moon's Hourbook"*	139
	News from Norwood	144
	Edward Learin in February	145

(Cover by Colin Spencer, Contents Page by Lars Bo, Frontispiece by William Pene du Bois)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gina Berriault

THE BYSTANDER

THE room on Vernal street in Los Angeles was the last room my father rented for us. In that old green three-storied house with pigeons and gables and fire-escape, he went over the line and his decline wasn't anymore a matter between father and son. For he assaulted a woman in that house, the woman he had liked the most and spent some nights with. It was a Saturday twilight and I had been reading on the bed up in our room and had thought the noise nothing unusual. Outbursts of voices came at any hour from the rooms below us, and along the hallways after two in the morning the homing tenants bungled and cursed. But someone leaped up the stairs and threw open the door and shouted at me to grab a blanket or a coat *or something for crissakes* and wrap your old man up. He had run out of the house with nothing on but the soap from the bath he'd been taking in the woman's rooms.

Under a date palm in the yellow dirt and yellow grass of the steep front yard of another rooming house half a block away, he stood shouting threats at the woman he'd left lying on the floor; and roomers watched from porches and from windows, and across the street men and women from the bar stood under the red neon goblet, laughing. He was marble white in the twilight, and the sour bar smell of his breath mingled with the carbolic smell of the soap. When I tried to cover him, he struck me with his elbow, sharp in my ribs as a crowbar; but when the police came, he permitted me to throw the blanket around him, knowing, as he heard the slamming of the car doors, that they were going to bumsrush him home for his clothes. As I crossed the blanket at his back he was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Noah blasting his son Ham for laughing like a fool at his nakedness and for calling his brothers into the tent to see their father sleeping off the wine.

The ward was located in the old hospital, as it was called, a rambling place of red brick curtained by ivy, and a block west of the new many-storied structure of concrete. I brought his suitcase, as the young man social worker had told me in some huge loft of hundreds of desks and social workers in an agency building somewhere else in the city. It contained his suit of navy blue worsted; his one white shirt and striped tie; his gray work shirt and white work socks, and his dry, bumpy, carpenter's workshoes. And over my arm I carried his raincoat and in my pocket his wallet, containing, under celluloid, a snapshot of my mother taken the year before she died—a dark-haired girl in a short, flowered dress, and a snapshot of myself at the age of five, standing high in the bowl of a drinking fountain.

The bald fellow in shirtsleeves in an office on the first floor told me, as he accepted the personal property across the counter, that my father had shown enough improvement in the past week to permit him among the more tractable patients on the second floor and that yesterday he had been moved up from the basement quarters. He told me, also, that my father had been examined by staff psychiatrists and the institution they'd chosen for him was Camarillo, in the coastal hills near Ventura. I was leaning my elbow on the counter, smoking a cigarette in my father's manner, which I had always thought was extremely worldly: removing the cigarette not with the tips or even the middle of the fingers, but down in the crotch of the two fingers so that the whole hand covered the mouth in the doing of it; and with this gesture demonstrated my reasonable nature. (If the father was unreasonable it did not follow that the son was, also; the son, said the leaning elbow, said the cigarette in hand, might profit in wisdom by the father's breakdown in a six weeks ordeal in hotel and housekeeping rooms.) Though it did not matter to this clerk whether I approved or disapproved of their taking my father off

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my hands. In this old brick building of ramps and ivy and barred windows, the personal element was extraneous; it was a place run by public taxation and the public was protecting itself. The thousands of the city who had never heard of him and never would hear of him were afraid of him, and his confinement and classification was a matter between him and them. When the police had escorted him, in his cotton trousers and with his unbuttoned shirt hanging out, down the house's two flights of stairs, the tenants of the house and tenants of the neighboring houses had assisted in his descent, their contempt seeming to shove him down from person to person.

Climbing the rubber carpeted ramp to the second floor and crossing the hallway, I pressed the bell to the side of double doors.

"Lewis Lisle," I said to the orderly unlocking the doors. "He's my father," and jarringly discovered that the name I was saying was that of a mentally incompetent person confined in these quarters that the orderly guarded. Before, I had thought that a name was like a mentor, even determining the person's physical peculiarities; now, I found that a name followed after, an echoing of a person, for it came to me that he might have been born a congenital idiot and yet been given the same name.

The room I entered was long and furnished as a living room with many wicker chairs and three wicker sofas with flat and faded cretonne cushions. The patients here were males, dressed in pajama-like, gray, cotton-flannel trousers and shirts, and on their feet were gray canvas slippers. Some sat with relatives and some sat by themselves, and one lay upon a sofa with his back outward. A group of them were conversing at the wide door to the sleeping room, and he was among them, his hands clasped behind him, his head tilted by a smug, lonely amusement with the peculiar reasoning of the others. The impact of his presence in this alien place made my throat swell, and I went up to him quickly and laid my hand upon his back but could not say the word, could not recall the name of what he was to me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At first I thought my hand was unfelt, he responded so slowly to it, but then I saw in the slow, annoyed turn of his eyes that he mistook me for a fellow inmate, bothering him with some crazy kind of confidence. He said my name "Arty," and the smell of oranges was his on breath. That was good, I thought; if he had eaten an orange then he was comparatively content.

"Did you have an orange?" I asked him.

"A visitor brought them to one of the boys," he said, and these were the first words exchanged between us in five days, the calmness of our voices recalling the shouting.

We sat down together on a wicker sofa, and the stun of exile was in his eyes and in his joints. He had lost more weight and his hair had grown longer and seemed grayer, an iron gray that was the heavy color of an ending; in spite of the orange, his lips were dry, rimmed by a white dust in the cracks. He sat with legs crossed, his troubled hands clasped on the upper knee.

"What you been doing with yourself, Arty?" he asked.

"Oh, I had a cold for a couple of days," I said.

"What did you do for it?"

"I did what you always said, I sweated it out," I said.

But he was embarrassed by the absence of one front tooth, lost a few weeks before, one night he got in a brawl in a cafe. His tongue hissed a little in the gap.

Beyond the door to the sleeping room were two rows of cots, several of them occupied. The men lay fully clothed atop the blankets, each enwrapped in his delusions as in a mummy winding, and one turned over with a great lethargic wrench, pushing with his elbows. At a table by a window in the sleeping room two patients were playing cards, one of the players a Negro, and his wife sat by him, feeding him pink ice cream from a pint carton with a little wooden spoon. In the room with us a young patient was playing the upright piano with meticulous discordancy, and among the relatives and patients and piano notes wandered an elderly man who recalled Caesar and yet would not have come to his prototype's shoulder: anciently roman and inviolably formal and yet his most intimate existence known. With warning flashes of his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

small black eyes he struck into being everyone he glanced at. A woman's bathrobe was tied smartly about his stocky body, a dark robe patterned with flowers.

"I want you to stay and meet my son," he said to me, laying his hand on my shoulder.

"Go on, beat it, go on," my father said to him, the jerking of his elbow establishing his brotherhood with the rest.

"He's a bastard, my son," the Caesar said.

The orderly, lounging in a wicker chair at the far end of the piano, lay his *Argosy* down upon his thigh and watched, and the old man, seeing my eyes darting to the place behind him where he knew the orderly sat, lifted his hand from me and went into the sleeping room where he stood with his back to us, watching the cardplayers.

"A son of a bitch himself," my father said, shifting position sprawlingly. "The loony tried to murder his own son. This guy is always talking about how his son and his son's wife were figuring to dig up some three thousand bucks he got buried somewhere. What the hell he thinks three thousand bucks is? I made that much in overtime the couple years I worked at Douglas aircraft during the war. That's what it amounts to—nothing. A down payment on a Ford, a funeral, a loan to your uncle, a week for you and me at Catalina, and it was gone. And this guy thinks it's enough to kill his son about. A loony."

The long living room was like Sunday: the inmate curled on the sofa, the visitors, the scent of oranges; the only thing missing was the comic papers. Over by a closed door to somewhere, a middle-aged woman in a black dress and a black straw hat with red cherries that had ripened before I was born sat on one side of a gray clad patient and her middle-aged sister sat on the other side of him—a middle-aged brother whom sunlight hadn't touched in a long while, a man who had sat all day on an army cot in a screened porch. Now, out in the world, he sat as stooped and as deaf, watching me with fear in his pale eyes. I saw him rise and stroll away, feeling more cornered by my glance than by the women who pressed him in between them. They continued to talk across him, not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

missing him, but I was interested in my effect upon him and sought him out wherever he had wandered, glancing into the sleeping room and finding him standing sideways, ten feet away, still as a stone, waiting for me to meet his eyes.

"What do you think they'll do to me, Arty?" my father was asking petulantly. He slid down, resting his elbow on the arm of the sofa and with his hands forming an arch to hide his face from the orderly, and his dominance over me and his dependency sprang across the week of our separation and we were as before. "I'd like to get rid of this cough," he said. "My chest has been bothering me from the coughing. They had me in the basement for a while, and the cold came up from the floor. Ah, Jesus, it was miserable down there, like a menagerie in the hold of a ship. The croakings and cryings."

"They do anything for your cough?"

"Nothing. The hell with them. Maybe they like you to come in with lung cancer or T.B. or whatever it is I got. Maybe they want you to die as soon as you can, conditions in bughouses being as crowded as they are."

"They got these places to cure people," I said.

He laughed explosively, folding up with the coughing laugh and then unfolding so far that his legs stretched straight out and his back arched out from the sofa's back. The patient on the next sofa turned over and, his head hanging over the edge, watched my father with the unblinking eyes of a mild and curious animal.

"They give us hot chocolate before we go to bed," my father said, "and a little cookie, star-shaped. You see how far man has progressed? They never did that in Bedlam, Arty, you tell that to any cynic you meet. You tell them in the psycho ward they give your father hot chocolate and a little cookie."

We were sitting facing the double doors to the hallway, and through the screen saw an orderly come up the ramp pushing a food conveyance and wait in the hallway, ringing for admittance. He pushed the metal cart through the living room and to the closed door, and the door was left open after he had passed through and I saw that the room beyond was a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dining room. Two women attendants were setting the long, dark table, and beyond that room was a kitchen with cabinets and a sink; and the sound of plate on plate from those rooms was a reassuring sound, and it seemed, though I knew it was impossible, that a wood fire had been lighted behind a screen somewhere in that room where the women set the table. The noises of the plates and silver prophesied for me the meals that I would spend in company of persons whose existence I did not know of, in houses I did not know of, as I had not known of this locked living room with the gray inmates and the wicker chairs. I felt, in that moment, like the child of an animal that drops its offspring in a sac and ambles on, for what had gone before seemed as nothing compared to what was to come, after this parting from my father.

Over on the sofa by the dining room door the sisters wound the straps of their purses around their right wrists, set their black oxfords heavily on the floor, and went to the sleeping room to find their brother and say goodbye. The Negro woman, tall and with the composure of a civil service clerk, drew on her coat over her high shoulders.

"They make everybody leave at suppertime, I guess," I said.

"Where you going to eat?" my father asked.

"I don't know," I said, not wanting to eat anywhere.

"There's a Chinese dump around the corner from Vernal," he said. "You seen it. They got chicken giblet chop suey and they don't leave the liver out—most gyp joints save the liver for something fancy—and they got those peas cooked in the pod, you know how they do." And disgusted by his detailing of trivia, he set his palms over his eyes. Under his blindfold, his mouth asked me, "You still at that place on Vernal?"

"Yes," I said.

"You going back to your Aunt Glorie's?"

"I guess I won't," I said.

"You going back to San Diego at all?"

"No, I guess I won't." We were talking lower for the other visitors were moving past us to the door, and the inmate lying on the next couch was awake on his back, his arms under his head.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What you going to write to her then?"

"What you want me to write to her?"

He thought about it a minute as if he had not thought about it every day of his confinement. "Well, I'd like her to keep my tools intact," he said. "I got the key to my tool box with me, or maybe you got it now, but that don't mean anything if she wants to sell them. I got some London spring steel saws in there I'd hate to lose. I'm afraid if you tell her where they got me, she'll sell my tools, she'll think I'm never coming back to live there anymore and hoping I won't. So you tell her not to sell my tools and that's all. Just write it in a letter and don't say anything else." He removed his hands to see if I were nodding.

"All right." I nodded.

"You could get a job in this lousy town, you wouldn't have to look too far. I was working in a laundry when I was fourteen. You're eighteen, ain't you?"

We stood up, then, to be with the rest of the visitors gathering by the double doors, waiting for the orderly. The card player, a heavy set fellow with a shaven head, came out with his wife, but the army cot patient did not come out with his sisters. Caesar in his flowered robe stood by the sofa we had vacated, muttering his chagrin with his son's failure to show up even at the last moment. The orderly in his white uniform strode from the dining room, jangling his keys playfully under the visitors' noses, and the visitors, stuporous from the afternoon's confinement, smiled servilely.

My father shook hands with me, it was the thing to do in public. In the corners of his eyes were white dots of weariness, and there was a sickly smell of anxiety upon him; I felt the sweat of it in the palm of his hand.

"The clerk says I can take the Greyhound bus, it'll get me there, or almost. Then I take a jitney that runs from the town to the hospital," I told him.

"They got a private bus for us patients," my father said, loudly so the orderly could hear his joking. "I hear it's a nice ride, see the ocean, see the hills, go past them mansions of the movie stars in Malibu."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The orderly, his *Argosy* folded in his hind pocket, smiled as he turned the key. There was no hanging back after that, the atmosphere of the ward became unbreathable at the final moment when the door was opened to the outer air, and I followed the three women down the ramp, out through the swinging glass doors, and down the concrete steps with the metal rail that the sisters held onto.

As I went along by the high wire fence, ivy woven, I glanced up to the second floor, not expecting at all to locate that particular ward and was surprised to find myself looking into the windows of the sleeping room; I saw the bent heads of the cardplayers and the back of the chair that the wife had sat in. By another window in that room the army cot inmate was standing in his gray garments, watching me go. For a second I thought he was my father, and I knew then, meeting eyes with the man, that I was guilty of something and he was accusing me of it, and it was the guilt of sight. For the man *was* my father and was also the father in the flowered robe who was probably still facing the locked doors. He was the parent who breaks down under the eyes of his child, the parent in the last years when all the circumstances of his life have got him trussed and dying, while the child stands and watches the end of the struggle and then walks away to catch a streetcar.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN SOLITARY

I

In the extremity of anguish,
Lonely in solitary confinement,
Men have been known to perform
Prodigious feats of memory
Through sheer concentration of will.

They relieve the mind.

Grozny, after seven years in Lubianka,
Had memorized every name and address
In an old directory of Moscow,
The only book he had.

It relieved his mind.

That was a feat which Svetlov,
Who prosecuted Grozny, could perform
With no effort whatever. Svetlov
Was singular in that he
Had a photographic memory.
Svetlov scoffed at the performance
As a mere mental trick. He valued
Other powers. Perforce, however,
He retained entire volumes in his mind,

Including the old directory of Moscow.

Each does what he can:
Svetlov, training the floodlight
On Grozny's face with no effort whatever...
Grozny, single-mindedly blinking
Over the pages of an old directory...

It is not especially to Grozny's credit,
Not especially, that his feat was the result

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of singular, almost superhuman effort.
Each does what he can.
Nor is Svetlov's performance the less
Because it cost less effort.
We are talking in terms of cost and credit.
Men are called to account, they
Give a good account of themselves, or not,
And their singularities are taken into account,
Or not.

Now you have memorized this poem,
Has it relieved your anguish?

2

Grozny resisted
The imposition of ideas
Upon his mind
Even when cornered.

Similarly Svetlov,
Who was assigned to prosecute the matter.
It was his sole concern.

Grozny was determined to resist
Until he had no choice,
The deprivation of which
Was his sole concern
Even after being cornered.

Svetlov, after capturing Grozny
Amid a blaze of floodlights,
Was determined
To deprive his prey of choice
When cornered.

You and Grozny and Svetlov, picked at random
Out of an old directory of effort...

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Each does what he can.
Each does prodigious feats.

Now you have resisted
The imposition of ideas when cornered,
Does it concern your anguish,
Or not?

—JOHN PAUKER

NARCISSUS
TO HIS FLESHLY SHADE

I want her to be what I need
her to be, i.e., a mirror for my
want. There is no man but owns his own soul.
His lack lies in the catalyst.
Surmise it or not, what she cannot know
is what image she replaces,

or why the moon's in her lashes
and in mine. The moon is one mirror of
a world, but purer for perspective, for
distance. Our man knows himself too
well for glassless love. You are too near, dear
shade! Fall back on deeper shallows.

—LEWIS TURCO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HAVE you met the man who's lost his memory yet?" said a tall stranger, breathing at me. He wore brown tweeds.

illustration by Donald Cammil

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His hand held his mahogany-colored highball unsteadily. His presence was offensive.

"No," I said, turning aside.

"You must see him!" said the stranger. "You must see the guest of honor!" He swung his free hand toward my arm. Forestalling its grip, I nodded assent and followed him.

I hadn't wanted to attend the party. I was sick of 5:30–7:30 cocktail parties that began at 6:15 and extended, for some of the few interesting people, till either 9:45 or 3 a.m., depending on who ate when, where, with whom, and who got to a liquor store for replenishments before 11:00 closing. I had definitely decided not to go. I sat sipping a highball in my room, congratulating myself on saying no for once to the alcoholics—I refer to an activity, like fireworks or acrobatics, not to people—of Cambridge in May. But my sips gradually became swallows, I reflected that this was my last spring in academic lotos-land, and at 6:01, spurred by the bells of St. Paul's campanile, I began dressing.

Now I was following an unknown fool toward a destination known only as some promised, glorified amnesiac. My host had casually told me, had evidently also told my bourboned guide, that an unusual and wise person, to whom he would like to introduce me, would be there—there in a disguise of reticence. This sage had requested that no special notice be paid him until the crowd had thinned, until he was ready for it. I suspected that my guide had forgotten or chosen to disregard this request, or hadn't been told of it; or, less likely, that the great amnesiac himself, in a kingly whim, had commanded my presence.

The crowd had thinned slightly, though the noise level gave contradictory evidence. Even so, our quest was hazardous, including one spilled martini and Gale (née Gail) Henderson, one of those well-thatched Radcliffe girls with metaphysically different costumes for each party, party, party, a soft-bottomed well into which men must fall. "My Jimmy," Gale breathed, her downy red cheek surprisingly close to mine—I had an instant's sharp glimpse of the delicate purple lines under her moist witch hazel eyes, the stiffened lacquer on her black

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lashes, and knew that tonight she was playing one of Hoffmann's girls, possibly all three—as we passed out of that room into a corridor. Our host was saying goodbye to some guests. As we passed him, he turned and saw my glass. "Jim! You need another drink! Let me—"

"Thanks, Paul, I'll get it myself. We're looking for your guest of honor."

"He isn't here yet." A study of his watch. "He should arrive around 8:30."

A glance at my watch: 7:40. "OK. I'm looking forward." I escaped my guide, reached the kitchen, and poured myself a fourth scotch-and-soda. Off the kitchen was a third-story back-stairs sun-porch. Not wanting to retrace my recent steps, I moved toward it. Five or six people, one of whom I vaguely knew from a February weekend party of red wine and guitars in a snowed-in Rhode Island lodge, were talking. The one I vaguely knew—I couldn't think of her name—screamed "Ah! Here's Jim! He knows op-er-a!" and froze me smiling in the doorway. "Oh! you know opera?" said a large, sweet, plain, open girl, scurrying up to me. "Do you know *Il mio tesoro?*"

"Yes," I said.

"Oh! Do sing it! Sing us *Il mio tesoro*!" She cast excited looks at the others, none of whom looked excited.

I stepped onto the porch, engaged in preliminary badinage, allowed myself to be further teased, then sang the aria, pitched lower than written, since I'm a baritone. I was in unusually good voice, for me: no sense of tightness, no quick wearing out. Applause followed. I was so happy that after little conversational pause I sang another aria, *De miei bollenti spiriti*, with even greater resonance, ease, and verve. More applause, though my audience had become three or four. Then I sang several more arias, not caringly noticing the departure of almost all audience and applause, until no one was left but the sweet, open girl. My voice felt tired, and I decided to go inside. "Thank you for listening, my dear."

"Oh! Won't you sing some more?"

"No. Alas!" I pointed significantly at my neck.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Oh! I understand! Thank you, oh thank you!"

Most of my audience had moved no further than the kitchen. One member of it, a stubby, swarthy fire-plug, returned to the porch after I left it. He was the husband of the girl I had deserted. Or so I gathered from their rings and the way, with no preliminaries, they solidly kissed. I excused myself past the others, read one of the poems by guests which Paul had scotch-taped here and there on the walls, thought ill of it, and returned to the main room. Thinking "best defense, good offense," I approached the first person I saw, extended my hand, and said "Jim Turtledove," pronouncing "dove" very much like "taub."

"Hugh FitzHugh," said the person, shaking my hand vigorously. His face was mottled, bristled, and bespectacled, his torso portly, his palm wet. "Jim, let me introduce you to my friend, Timothy Steele," he said.

"Hello," I said. "My last name's really Thomas."

"Are you a poet?" Timothy said.

"Yes."

"So am I. FitzHugh here mostly writes prose—or so he says."

"I have tried my hand at poems—in free verse, you understand—but I feel happier in the less rigorous medium," FitzHugh said.

"Have you submitted any poems to magazines?" Timothy said, looking at me.

"Yes," I said.

"Have you sold any?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

I told him.

"I want nothing more than to sell a poem to *The New Yorker*," Timothy said. "But they anticipate every move I make! I was just finishing a poem on the decline of Boston, getting it ready to send in, when what did they do but publish that one by Starbuck! You've seen it?"

"Yes. I like it."

"So do I. But why couldn't I have written one first! It

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

happens every time. I get a good subject, think about it, brood over it, get to the point where I can start to write a poem, put down some lines, revise, tear up, start over, get a whole poem, revise, revise, brood some more, polish and revise, and then, when I have the thing almost in submissable shape, what do they do but—," He broke off, exasperated.

"Yes. I don't blame you for being upset. That's happened to me. Once—"

"Sorry to interrupt," said Paul, interrupting. He turned to me. "The guest of honor has arrived and would like to meet you."

"Fine, Paul. But I'm talking with Timothy"—I nodded capaciously in Timothy's direction—"and I don't—"

"Oh. Well. Bring Timothy along."

So Timothy and I followed Paul toward what must be the true throne, leaving Hugh FitzHugh, who had already left us, his gin-and-tonic being empty, behind.

We walked through the main room. Gale Henderson was off in a corner seducing some one, or pretending to do so; anyway, they were occupied, playing in her sandbox. No one cried or whispered "Jim" to me. With no incidents, our procession reached a second bedroom. The only person in the room, so far as I could see, was Harry Samson.

"Hello, Harry!" I said. I had met Harry at several parties during the winter and had liked him. Name a topic, subject, theme: Harry would say what he thought straight out, then give, in dendritic detail, 78 corollaries, qualifications, other sides.

But instead of returning my greeting, Harry looked at Paul brightly, expectantly, as if ready to be introduced to new acquaintances. "This is Harry Samson," Paul said. "Jim Thomas, Timothy Steele."

"Delighted to meet you," Harry said, smiling at me, then at Timothy. I shook his hand mechanically, Timothy did so naturally. Then I came to: *this* was, after all, the guest of honor! the man who had lost his memory! Had Harry—a blow on the skull, a trauma, an inner dislocation—become amnesiac?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"How did you lose your memory?" I asked.

Harry looked at Paul.

"I told Jim that you had," Paul said.

Harry looked at me. His eyes shone. "That isn't the right question," he said.

"What is?" I said.

"That's for him to know and you to find out," Paul said, smiling like a satyr.

Timothy cleared his throat. "Why did you lose your memory?" he asked.

Harry looked, his eyes burning, at Timothy. "Ah! that is the right question! And I'll tell you why. Because there was nothing I could do."

"What do you mean?" I said. Harry kept looking at Timothy.

"I knew there was nothing I could do—nothing at all—to prevent the destruction of the earth. I knew I could never stop some sub-genius imbecile from starting, by a finger pressed on a button, perhaps, or more likely an order telephoned to an ICBM range, a conflict ending with the end of mankind. I knew I had no influence, no position, no voice; I couldn't be elected if I ran for senator, I have no chance of telling my senator what to do and wouldn't know what to tell him if I did, I'd be overwhelmed if I were senator; I saw no way of swaying the course of events. So, I thought, what shall I do? Suicide? No: better to wait for genocide. Discovery of a balm named *pax*? I haven't the talents. So, I decided to lose my memory."

"You gave up hope?" I said.

"No. I gave up fear that each day might be my last."

A silence. In it I examined Harry: a stocky associate professor of history, who played the violin. The fingers of his right hand tapered delicately, like limp steel. His left hand was a claw. I swallowed the residue of my drink.

"Harry, you've met me before," I said, looking at him.

He stared at me, at Paul, at Timothy, back at me. "I beg—"

"No. Harry, you have met me before," I said.

He chuckled briefly. "No. You are mistaken, Jim, I fear.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I have never met you before. Because I have lost my memory."

"How do you remember, then, that my name is Jim?" I said.

"Come off it, Jim," Paul whispered.

Timothy looked interested and shrewd.

"Don't you see?" Harry said, eyes of beads. "I *can't* remember having met you before, *because* I have lost my memory. But I only lose my memory once a day. I'd say I'm like Cinderella if I lost it at midnight. But I don't. I lose my memory at 3:30 a.m., every day, while sleeping."

"You don't dream? You're never awake?"

"Never at 3:30 a.m."

"You never recall anything from your childhood? Despite yourself?"

"Never. *Because* I have lost my memory".

"You're trying to play a fantastic rôle. Poets do this every day. But you're not a poet. And if you don't watch out, you'll stop being a person."

"I doubt that. I have already become more of a person than I ever was. I am the man who has lost his memory."

Could Timothy have been the interlocutor in that last exchange? I tried to imagine him trying to press Harry back into the ordinary molds of intercourse. But I couldn't. There Timothy was, having been above-board, cynical and silent. I had said the obvious.

"Excuse me," I said, waving my glass at Paul's chin. "Another drink."

IT pleases me to think I can do certain mechanical things imaginatively. One of them is driving a car in New York City. I enjoy trying to collapse Kenneth Burke's terms, to make the jagged, arhythmic pace of city traffic approach the condition of lullaby. An acquaintance of a friend of mine has studied the traffic lights on Queens Boulevard in both directions so fully that in non-rush hour situations he can travel the 3.2-mile stretch of it he habitually uses without coming to a full stop, going nine mph here, 26 mph there, three mph during the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

amoral suspension of red's reluctantly yielding to green at some tricky intersection. This is his chief claim to fame. Not wishing so limiting an excellence, I haven't yet gone so far. But I have my devices. Approaching a red light from a distance, usually just after shooting through an amoral suspension, I brake, downshift, dawdle, and, corner of my eye fixed on the light governing the cross-street, time my acceleration into an open lane past stopped dummies (who, if Imperials, Cadillacs, or even Fords, soon zoom past me, unless I and some news-truck—a double-parked car helps on three-lane drives, while nothing will do on most of the newfangled one-way avenues except, of course, utter congestion) at the precise moment when red joins green on it. Using Park Avenue to get north or south, I know I have seven or eight blocks in ordinary traffic, ten to twelve in the middle of the night, between red lights; I have fun choosing the appropriate moment to turn off. 67th? 69th? 71st? (On Fourth Ave., Brooklyn, I once made 15 blocks in a stretch. Brooklyn's arteries relax more than Manhattan's.) The one-way avenues, with staggered lights attuned to a steady 24 mph, are less exciting. The only game I play with them is Entering the Intersection as the Green Turns Red—the exact reverse of the sport motormen of A trains enjoy between 125th and 59th. I am aware of the use of that old tunnel, sometimes blocked off, in the middle of Fourth-Park below Grand Central, and of the rectangular Alpine route round Grand Central itself. I have theories as to the relative merits of the West Side Highway, the East River (pardon me! Franklin Delano Roosevelt) Drive, or one and another of those one-way avenues for getting from Bay Ridge to 23rd and Sixth, or, indeed, to the mid-Bronx, at various times of day. And, being a poet, I love working my way back to sanity from the intersection of W. 4th and W. 11th.

I reached Manhattan this time in the late morning, and could have spent the whole afternoon driving here and there, outwitting or being nonwitted by lights. In my new VW, with its positive thirst for downshiftings, its four forward speeds, its delighted roars and whines, the fun would have been immense. But my mildly puritanical upbringing—I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attended a Congregational Sunday School, summers only, and remember innocently embarrassing the teacher, a gentle, open-faced breeder of cocker spaniels, by asking the meaning of "circumcision" in *The Acts of the Apostles*—asserted itself. I left the Henry Hudson Parkway, tortuously ascended Washington Heights, parked my car near where I might stay, and entered the Independent subway.

Where next? I thought of telephoning an old friend at his midtown office, but decided against it. Better to be anonymous awhile. Or what's a city for? Or some such rot. The idea of going to the 125th St. station of the New York Central-New Haven presented itself. It would be fun to watch trains. Once, when I was 13, I visited my aunt and did just that. She was astounded and hilarious when I told her about it: astounded that I would think doing such a thing worth my while; hilarious because, thinking, as I did then of most signs, that the sign "SHOW YOUR TICKETS: NO PERSON ALLOWED TO GO TO PLATFORM WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION" meant what it said, I bought a ticket from 125th St. to Morrisania for I think it was 11 cents. The ancient guardian of the staircase nodded suspicously at me, in appropriate response to my tremors, as I showed him my ticket; I watched many trains; then I crept guiltily down, not looking at the guardian, and out to the street. I still have that ticket, being one of the tribe that likes to keep things—including, especially, memories.

But 125th St. station wouldn't do. For one thing, here I was, token intaken, physically, emotionally, psychosomatically ready to rocket south. For another, there wouldn't be many trains at 125th St. at midday: not many, anyway, in contrast with the racketing thunders of 5:40 p.m. I thought, for no reason, of No One, New Hampshire—or possibly Noone, though I prefer to think otherwise—a stop on a little-used branch line of the Boston and Maine, visible from route 202 south of Peterborough. Was I no one? I preferred to think so. As I began pretending to think so, an AA train arrived and took me in. I switched at 145th St. to an A train, front car, and from 125th to 59th stood with renewed pleasure, one hand on blue metal, face against wire-webbed glass, body

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

swaying, a child to my right and down, as the anonymous motorman, chain-bolted in his cab, came steadily, without slackening speed, to a red light, went, without slackening speed, through the light just after it turned green, and approached, without increasing speed, steadily, steadily onward, the next red light.

At 42nd St. I got off, emerged, and scanned movie marquees. The Apollo, where I twice saw *Rigoletto* with Tito Gobbi, had a double-feature made of teen-agers, guns, sex. The Astor had Barry Fitzgerald being Irish, either with or without the assistance of Bing Crosby. The Palace had some earth-shaking extravaganza, featuring one or another Hollywood sinuosity as a Mississippi, Nile, or Sea of Galilee slut, very good at heart, ready to be readily translated, near the end, by the reformed handsome clear-cut daring con-man, into romantic heavenly bliss. The Waverly was probably playing a vintage Guinness and *Great Expectations*, but it was way off in left or right field, certainly not in Times Square. I entered the BMT subway.

My plans until then had been unclear. But with that move they crystallized. I would take a West End or Sea Beach—no matter which, no special preference for elevated clattering or tunnelly rumbling—to Coney Island. This I did. (A Sea Beach if you *must* know.) When I arrived, did I buy a hot-dog and orange at Nathan's? promenade the boardwalk? ride the parachute-jump? ogle other onlookers? No. I climbed to the walk over all the tracks, found a good point of vantage, and watched trains come in and out. Sea Beaches and West Ends, from the west. Brighton Beaches and D trains, from the east. I stared, as if I planned to remember them, at the numbers of the various cars, although I already knew from past observings that Sea Beaches were in 6000s, West Ends and Brighton Beaches in 2000s, D trains between 100 and 1600 or so. The City of New York moves in unmysterious ways in numbering its subway cars. It avoids duplication. For example: some of the post-war, fluorescently-lit cars on the IND line, with numerals in orange-red instead of white, took up their numbers where the old, riveted, incandescent (some by ACF, some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Pullman-Standard, some by Pressed Steel) cars left off. But they soon approached 2000. So the powers caused them to jump clear over the BMT's 2000 s and to start, as most post-war IND cars do, with a 3. I have seen the car 3000 and the car 3333. What the IRT has been doing in the meantime with its 4000s and 5000s is outside the scope of this discourse.

Trains coming into and out of Coney Island made a maze for me for a couple of hours. Then, thirsty, I descended to the street, had three or four quick beers, and, remembering a past excellence, got into a D train and hurtled north. At Boro Hall I changed to a GG, frequent stopper, up to Queens Plaza. I was just in time. On the top shelf of that frenetic intersection I saw the sun, big red passionless bomb, drop on Manhattan with no force at all. I saw the sun set. When all of it was gone, I entered a BMT train bound for Times Square and sat down. A few people, not many, were standing; the rush was still mainly away from offices, though partly toward restaurants and theatres. I thought of walking up to the front and watching the lights change, but rejected that idea; I was tired of seeing, and the front of the train was five or six cars ahead. Then I looked at the people seated across from me and saw Harry Samson.

Harry was reading *The New York Post* and was partly hidden by swaying standees, but he was unmistakably Harry. What was he doing here? on this train? It took me a minute to remember that this was summer, not spring, New York, not Cambridge, and Harry probably had relatives or maybe a house of his own in Kew Gardens or Forest Hills. I stared at him, thinking, for some time, until, putting his *Post* away decisively, he looked straight in my direction.

I smiled what I felt to be greetings and pleased recognition.

His eyes were utterly expressionless.

And yet we stared at each other, my smile fading, for more than a minute until his eyes detached themselves, like the suckers of clams from sand, to seek a happier habitat. He looked hungry. He never reopened his *Post*. His eyes focussed, so far as I was able to tell between standees, either nowhere at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all or inward, into his brain, the rest of our trip separately together. I thought for a moment of going over and introducing myself. But it would be, at best, like that evening in Cambridge: he would look surprised, say he was happy to meet me, ask me who I was? what I did? why I was there? Or worse: who could ask such questions on a subway train? And some standee would take my seat, leaving me lurching in uneasy, pockmarked talk with the amnesiac Samson. So I sat still. And I thought, as the train racketed along, of how Harry began life anew at 3:30 that morning.

When the train reached 59th St., I got up to leave. Harry Samson had not yet left. Then I felt a sudden resistance to my exit, a tugging against my left arm, a strange refusal to let me leave. I redoubled my efforts toward the platform. The resistance grew in response. In desperation, fearing that Samson had at this last minute grabbed my arm, I turned around. I found instead a large Negro lady, trembling with rage and indignation, on the verge of the outcry which decades of subjugation had taught her (through her mother) would be unseemly. My left arm had inadvertently come between her purse and herself. She had been a standee; I had been glancing at Samson. I excused myself, freed my arm, and, just before the doors closed, lunged through them to the comparative air of the platform. I looked back through the window at Samson, who was looking out toward me, unseeingly. What was he doing? Would he go on to Times Square and then get out? Or was he riding this train back and forth, back and forth between Queens and Manhattan, not knowing what he was doing, unknowingly, not knowing what he was undoing?

I climbed up to street air, turned southwest, and walked. This involved skirting a few buildings at right angles. I thought of phoning Gale Henderson, who would almost certainly be in New York, but decided dinner must come first. I ate it at some half-heartedly pretentious place, by no means a cafeteria, certainly less than a restaurant—a jaded place-to-go or to-have-gone, with a complete spaghetti-and-meat-balls dinner for $1.65—between 59th and Times Square. Then I thought

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

again of phoning Gale—but decided instead to think of The Time, the great first time...

"Hello?" she said.

"Hello," I said.

"And who is this?" she said.

"This is Jim Thomas," I said. "Cambridge."

"Oh?" she said.

"Can you come to dinner with me tonight?" I said.

We had a wonderful dinner, with talk, jokes, cheap wine, and not much to look forward to. When we left the restaurant Gale exclaimed over the sunset, the sunset that still let itself be seen, lingered down W. 52nd. "Yes," I said, gathering her in. "Fine sunset." She exclaimed some more as we walked toward my old car.

That car was '49 Chevrolet, not new VW. But when she got in, it was chariot toward our goal. I didn't know this at first. I have always been too cerebral. As we meandered down Manhattan, I thought we might simply be going back to her apartment. But I soon sensed she didn't want that. So, in reaction, I took us over Manhattan Bridge.

"Where are we going?" she said.

"To Brooklyn," I said. "Smell the coffee."

We smelt the coffee. Then we penetrated Brooklyn. Up Fulton, to the Grand Army Plaza; then down the side of Prospect Park, by zig-zags to the sides of the cemetery wherein my grand-parents lay buried, whereby teen-agers smooched; then onto Fourth Avenue, and her hand entered my hair. We drove along, many blocks, I not trying to outwit the lights, and her hand kept moving in my hair. I thought where would be the best place. I turned here, there, her hand in my hair, through Bay Ridge, until finally we came to rest somewhere, on an avenue in view of the bay above Fort Hamilton, below the 69th St. Ferry. I parked. I began to move my hand in her hair. Then she drew me to her, and I moved to her willingly, mouth to her mouth, body to her body. We kissed a long time. I very much liked her taste. We kept up excited kissing, and stroking each other, and feeling (I speak for myself) detachedly engaged, until something snapped, some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

barrier broke, and I felt that both of us felt that nothing stood in the way of ourselves, and we clasped, embraced, involved ourselves in new intimacy. We stayed in this feeling for what seemed a long time. Then I heard a voice somewhere outside.

"What?" I said, stupidly sticking my head out my window.

"Would you please move your car?" said a stranger, smiling intimately. I started the car, moved it backwards four feet, and the stranger drove his car into his garage.

Then we resumed kissing, confronting, being passionate. Our intimacy, though, seemed less. Then it was over, and we drove back toward Manhattan, along the elevated highway, into the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, up through Manhattan's oldest veins.

"I love you," I said, letting her off.

"I love you," she said. "See you again!"

She let herself into her building without looking behind.

I drove off into the later night, wondering, Who am I?...

But I hadn't decided, now, to phone Gale Henderson again. Why not? What else? Anything else?

I had walked, while remembering, into Times Square. I entered a Whelan's, bought an El Producto Bouquet, lit it, and puffed. On 42nd near Sixth I passed a cut-rate book store where I once bought *H. E. Bates* by Edward Garnett, *The Enchanted Grindstone* by a poet-professor named Robinson, a third title I can't remember, and, *pièce de résistance*, *The Unstrung Harp* by Edward Gorey, at 19c each. *The Unstrung Harp* so struck and tickled the lyres of my friends in Cambridge that when I next weekended in New York I bore with me commissions to buy six more copies of that dark, wry work. My mission was easily accomplished: a large stack remained to be remaindered. O fate of authors? destiny uneschewed! Fount of self-pity! I cut short my lament, reasserted my transient anonymity to myself, rejected the notion of seeing if any copies of *The Unstrung Harp* lingered now, in 1959, four years later, in that bookstore, and turned down Sixth. 40th St.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between Sixth and Fifth is very quiet at night. I walked over to Broadway for a view of the Met.

I had seen many operas here, in this solid, doomed, grimy brick-and-mortar tetrazoid. And my most vivid memory, as I stood watching the Elgin clock move from 9:16 to 9:17, 9:18, 9:19, was of what seemed to me a magnificent performance of *Götterdämmerung*. It was and is the only performance of that monument I have seen. I was sitting in the last row of the Family Circle with a friend, so I naturally valued big voices that carried. The biggest, most carrying voice that evening was Deszo Ernster's. Astrid Varnay could be heard most of the time, and managed her faithful steed Gräne: the horse, a trouper, neither leapt into the pit nor nuzzled a tuba in search of oats. Hans Hötter, one of my favorite artists, sang and acted impeccably the unrewarding rôle of Gunther, which required him to play dead, spread out on the cold, cold stage, for almost half an hour. But Ernster as Hagen, keeping his lonely watch with immense, guttural, analytical statements about his rôle, summoning his tribe with tremendously loud and barbaric "Hoi-ho!"s in which his whole frame visibly rose and fell, shook and vibrated—Ernster, Hungarian *basso profundo*, with the longest time and space between the peaks of his sound-waves of any singer I have heard, stole, for me, the show. I reveled in his every utterance.

Less than two minutes from *Ring's* end, when the Rhine overflowed in every direction, Valhalla crumbled in fire and quake, and the orchestra cataclysmatically played fifteen or twenty *motifs* in kaleidoscopic sequence, some of them simultaneously, all quadruple *fortissimo*, a couple in front of us got up, blocking our view of the stage. I was annoyed. My friend was furious. "Yes! Go!" he spat at their backs. "Get out!" He dismissed them with one hand, a taut, angry claw, as spontaneous and incisive as the gesture with which Wotan, saying "Geh!", contemptuously kills Hunding at the end of Act II, *Die Walküre*. His face was red, his protuberant brown eyes glare ice. "Get out! Get down to the street before the rest of us! Get home five minutes sooner! Don't give a damn about the music! Why did you come here at all?!" The offen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ders, without turning around, scurried sideways over three or four others, then away down the aisle. We saw the last minute of the end without obstruction.

After yelling "Bravo!" a few minutes and clapping our hands crimson—not sore, since we played enough tennis and squash to keep our palms in condition—we walked down the many stairs to the street. Then we decided to go to the stage door, on 40th near Seventh. It was windy and cold. Twenty-five or thirty people stood there, jumping from foot to foot, some wondering aloud when Varnay would come out. Most had autograph-books. We had stood there about fifteen minutes when a large, late-middle-aged man, wrapped in a heavy fur coat, emerged from the sacred portal. I have never seen a more tired face. The lines of age were inlined with fatigue and some strips of unremoved greasepaint. An ample woman detached herself from the group and moved familiarly toward him. "Come, my dear," he said to her, patting her black-gloved hand. He was unmistakably Deszo Ernster. No one asked him for his autograph. He had sung the longest, most taxing rôle in the opera, and had sung it well. He and his wife got into a taxicab and drove off. Ten minutes later Varnay appeared, gave autographs, drove off. Then my friend and I walked away, but didn't repeat our performance of the night after the first opera I attended: *La Traviata*, December 31, 1948. Albanese, Peerce, Warren. Afterward, Times Square. Warm gin-and-ginger-ale from my friend's hip-flask. Mob-movements here-and-there in the screaming crowd. Midnight! the descending electric bomb! the New Year! Victory! Fresh starts! An end to traumas! And then the ride back to my friend's New Jersey home on a Public Service bus: we entertained our fellow passengers, or some of them, perhaps, with an almost complete rendition of *The Mikado*, first to last, taking all parts. God, we were drunk.

I left the slumbering Met and its moving clock, which now said 9:29, and entered a nearby tavern. I sat on a stool near the street side of the oval bar and ordered draft beer. While I sat there, slowly drinking beer after beer, various people came in: two or three probable bums; one or two slick ones, panderers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or co-proprietors; one definite proprietor, to whom the arrogant bartender was all deference; a boy, in need and fear of company; a lone soldier, totally lone, ice-tight; three unaccompanied women, perhaps whores, though one was carried off by a man, strickenly debonair, who called her "my wife;" and many pressmen, compositors, newspapermen. The last group formed the steady core of the place, gave it its tone. They came in, were served by the arrogant bartender with *PM*, or *Philadelphia*, or *Carstairs*, or *Four Roses*, to their accustomed two or three shot limits, usually with beer chasers; they chaffed each other and their patron, told jokes, and left. Home to their wives? and, for most of them, families? via detours? Who knows? God knows I didn't know, though I guessed. Meanwhile the *TV* kept going constantly, showing during the last hours of my sitting there a World War II movie I had once seen in a theatre, with romantic sub-plot, deaths of people beyond game-limits, grenades tossed into kerosened stage-properties, the hero court-martialed, judged innocent, happy end. I couldn't feel cynical. People had died—Americans at Guadalcanal, Japanese at Nagasaki—and many Americans, Japanese, British, Germans, French, Australians, Chinese, Canadians, Poles, Italians, Russians, Czechs, Bulgarians, Turks, Egyptians—the sides soon merge, in any narrative of nationalities—North Koreans, South Koreans—in too many wars and conflicts for me to feel cynical. I only felt sad and depressed, looking at Mitchum and Ryan, or their World War II Hollywood counterparts, moving on their bellies against the enemy. Maybe, I thought, I remember too much. Then I finished my last beer, moved to the telephone booth, dialled the number of a couple I know on the upper East Side, woke the better half, got permission to stay the night, and went there by foot and bus. I couldn't stand going underground at that point. She had left the door unlocked, the couch-bed made. I could think about my VW in the morning.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TWO POEMS

If ghosts existed there are some men
who could never effectually belong
to a thin as air congregation,
who'd find the trailing end of some bitter
wind's or yew-tree's slanting thunder
weeping or not their place to shelter under.

If ghosts exist I shall be one of them,
knowing with love each individual bright
station of any heavenly spirit:
yet never approaching high for long,
but as if the refracted alleys of distance
were the reality of my thin substance.

No one will need to fear contact
with spirits as content as we shall be,
the devoted private friends of humanity;
we being ghosts shall long ago have swallowed
our private lie, our secret disgrace,
and winnowed mind to influences of place.

Ship-building emperors commanded
these night-obscuring giant beams,
with open-work like ribs defended
what is from what merely seems,
among those timbers old
the young sea-captains sailed.

Storms of a classical illusion
broke open, bit by bit, the mind
in oceans where a bleak confusion
on a ruined shore has left behind
dead Plato, litter of broken wood,
redefining moral good.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PETER LEVI S. J.

Some broken stone, sublimely quiet
poses against an open sky,
(the subject populations riot,
the discipline of the troops is high),
now in the officers' mess
they mention happiness.

And young men in romantic places
curbing an adolescent rage
reform the lines of their cold faces
in a dead father's still image,
whose mental life is now
this service which they owe:

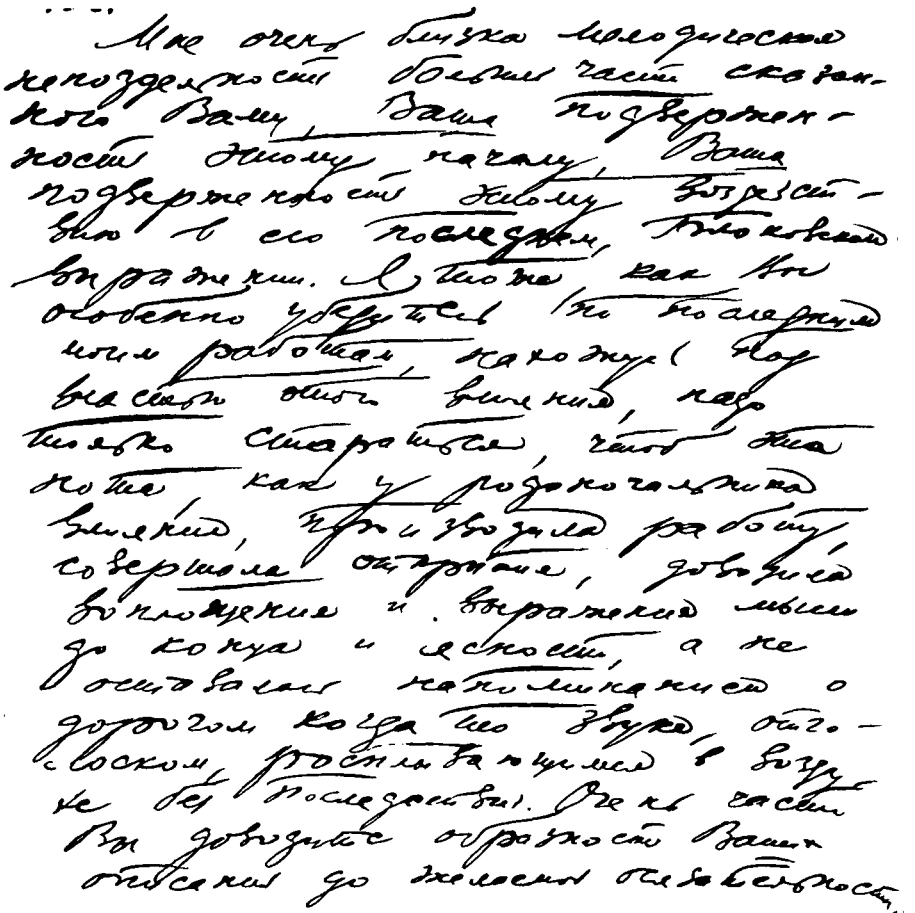
by a nervous trick of rhetoricians,
judgement, language for events,
to deny all images, all visions,
to choose gay-coloured ornaments,
self-mirroring man and woman
in a lost image as human.

But when these mental forces break
no natural anguish can uncover
the lost ship in the draining lake
which a savage hermit brooded over,
who is now defined again
in a quiet craze of pain;

and those first virtuous professions
haunt angels and their whispering throats,
while the sad wise in grave processions
(deep-coloured gems, light-coloured coats)
let fall their heavy tears
gaunt music for lost ears.

—PETER LEVI S.J.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"*The melodic authenticity of most of your work is very dear to me, as is your faithfulness to the principle of melody and to 'ascent' in the supreme sense that Alexander Block gave that word.*

"*You will understand from a reading of my most recent works that I, too, am under the power of the same influence, but we must try to make sure that, as in Alexander Block, this note works, reveals, incarnates, and expresses thoughts to their ultimate clarity, instead of being only a reminder of sounds which originally charmed us, an inconsequential echo dying in the air.*"

Fragment of a letter from Boris Pasternak to a fellow poet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

portrait by Auenkoff

THE ART OF FICTION XXV

Three visits with

BORIS PASTERNAK

I decided to visit Boris Pasternak about ten days after my arrival in Moscow last January. I had heard much about him from my parents who had known him for many years, and I had heard and loved his poems since my earliest years.

I had messages and small presents to take to him from my parents and from other admirers. But Pasternak had no phone, I discovered in Moscow. I dismissed the thought of writing a note as too impersonal. I feared that in view of the volume of his correspondence he might have some sort of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standard rejection form for requests to visit him. It took a great effort to call unannounced on a man so famous. I was afraid that Pasternak in later years would not live up to my image of him suggested by his poems—lyric, impulsive, above all youthful.

My parents had mentioned that when they saw Pasternak in 1957, just before he received the Nobel Prize, he had held open house on Sundays—a tradition among Russian writers which extends to Russians abroad. As an adolescent in Paris, I remember being taken to call on the writer Remizov and the famous philosopher Berdyaev on Sunday afternoons.

On my second Sunday in Moscow I suddenly decided to go to Peredelkino. It was a radiant day and in the center of the city, where I stayed, the fresh snow sparkled against the Kremlin's gold cupolas. The streets were full of sightseers—out-of-town families bundled in peasant-like fashion walking towards the Kremlin. Many carried bunches of fresh mimosa —sometimes one twig at a time. On winter Sundays large shipments of mimosa are brought to Moscow. Russians buy them to give to each other or simply to carry, as if to mark the solemnity of the day.

I decided to take a taxi to Peredelkino, although I knew of an electric train which went from the Kiev railroad station near the outskirts of Moscow. I was suddenly in a great hurry to get there, although I had been warned time and again by knowledgeable Muscovites of Pasternak's unwillingness to receive foreigners. I was prepared to deliver my messages and perhaps shake his hand and turn back.

The cab driver, a youngish man with the anonymous air of taxi-drivers everywhere, assured me that he knew Peredelkino very well—it was about 30 kilometers out on the Kiev highway. The fare would be about 30 roubles (about $3). He seemed to find it completely natural that I should want to drive out there on that lovely sunny day.

But the driver's claim to know the road turned out to be a boast, and soon we were lost. We had driven at fair speed along the four-lane highway, free of snow and of billboards or gas stations. There were a few discreet road signs but they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

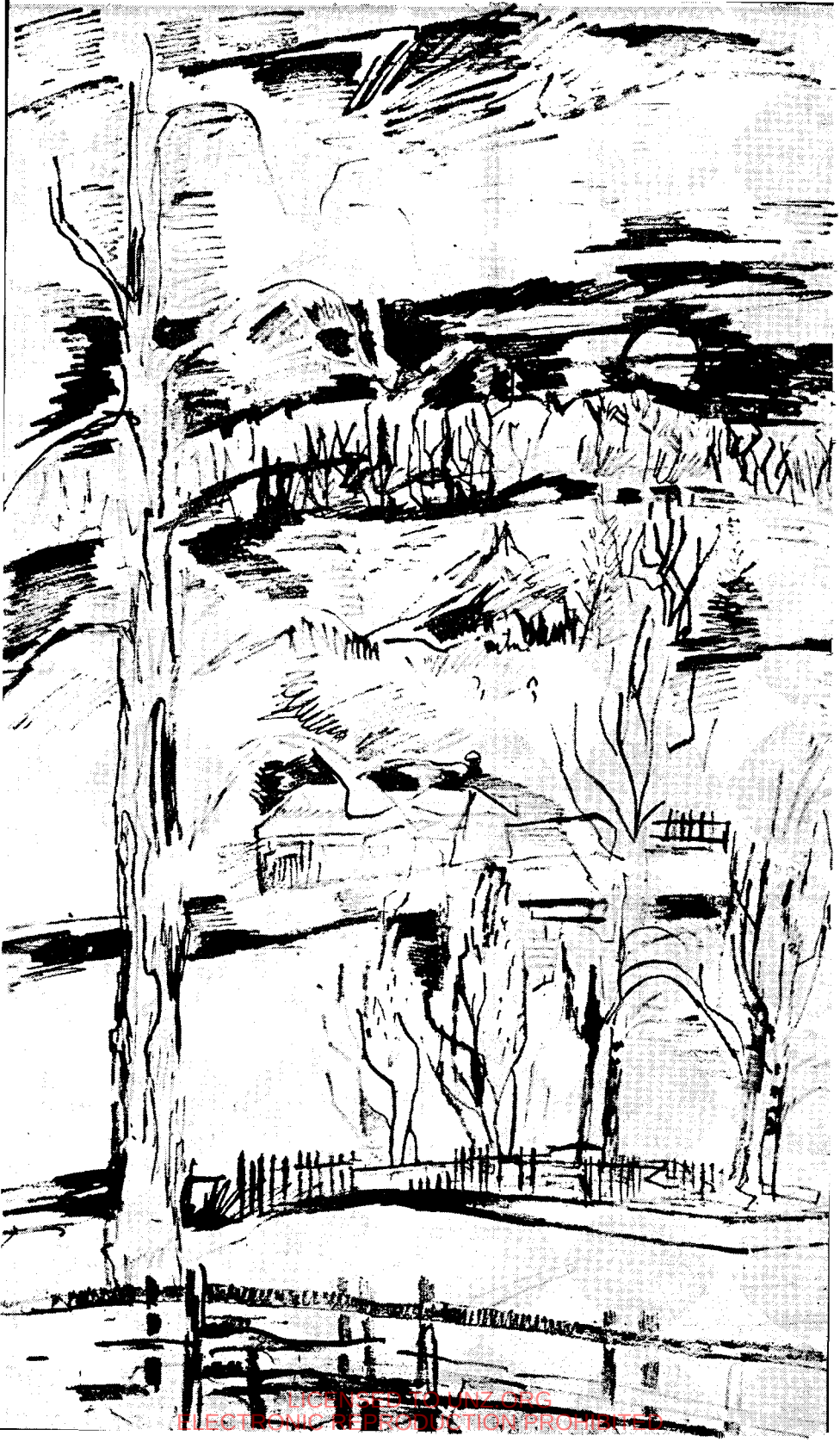
failed to direct us to Peredelkino, and so we began stopping whenever we encountered anyone to ask directions. Everyone was friendly and willing to help, but nobody seemed to know of Peredelkino. We drove for a long time on an unpaved, frozen road through endless white fields. Finally we entered a village from another era, in complete contrast with the immense new apartment houses in the outskirts of Moscow—low, ancient-looking log cottages bordering a straight main street. A horse-drawn sled went by; kerchiefed women were grouped near a small wooden church. We found we were in a settlement very close to Peredelkino. A ten minute drive on a small winding road through dense evergreens and I was in front of Pasternak's house. I had seen photographs of it in magazines and suddenly there it was on my right: brown, with bay windows, standing on a slope against a background of fir trees and overlooking the road by which we had accidentally entered the town.

Peredelkino is a loosely-settled little town, hospitable-looking and cheerful at sunny midday. Many writers and artists live in it year round in houses provided, as far as I know, for their lifetimes, and there is a large rest home for writers and journalists run by the Soviet Writers' Union. But part of the town still belongs to small artisans and peasants and there is nothing "arty" in the atmosphere.

Tchoukovsky, the famous literary critic and writer of children's books lives there in a comfortable and hospitable house lined with books—he runs a lovely small library for the town's children. Constantin Fedine, one of the best known of living Russian novelists, lives next door to Pasternak. He is now the first secretary of the Writers' Union—a post long held by Alexander Fadeyev who also lived here until his death in 1956. Later, Pasternak showed me Isaac Babel's house where he was arrested in the late 1930's and to which he never returned.

Pasternak's house is on a gently curving country road which leads down the hill to a brook. On that sunny afternoon the hill was crowded with children on skis and sleds, bundled like teddy-bears. Across the road from the house is a large fenced

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO NZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

field—a communal field cultivated in summer; now it is a vast white expanse dominated by a little cemetery on a hill, like a bit of background out of a Chagall painting. The tombs are surrounded by wooden fences painted a bright blue, the crosses are planted at odd angles, and there are bright pink and red paper flowers half buried in the snow. It is a cheerful cemetery.

The house's veranda makes it look much like an American frame house of forty years ago, but the firs against which it stands mark it as Russian. They grow very close together and give the feeling of deep forest, although there are only small groves of them around the town.

I paid the driver and with great trepidation pushed open the gate separating the garden from the road and walked up to the dark house. At the small veranda to one side there was a door with a withered, half-torn note in English pinned on it saying, "I am working now. I cannot receive anybody, please go away." After a moment's hesitation I chose to disregard it, mostly because it was so old-looking and also because of the little packages in my hands. I knocked, and almost immediately the door was opened—by Pasternak himself.

He was wearing an astrakan hat. He was strikingly handsome—with his high cheek-bones and dark eyes and fur hat he looked like someone out of a Russian tale. After the mounting anxiety of the trip I suddenly felt relaxed—it seemed to me that I had never really doubted that I would meet Pasternak.

I introduced myself as Olga Andreyev, Vadim Leonidovitch's daughter, using my father's semi-formal name. It is made up of his own first name and his father's, the short-story writer and playwright, Leonid, author of the play *He Who Gets Slapped* and *The Seven Who Were Hanged*, etc. Andreyev is a fairly common Russian name.

It took Pasternak a minute to realize that I had come from abroad to visit him. He greeted me with great warmth, taking my hand in both of his, and asking about my mother's health and my father's writing, and when I was last in Paris,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and looking closely into my face in search of family resemblances. He was going out to pay some calls. Had I been a moment later I would have missed him. He asked me to walk part of the way with him—as far as his first stop, at the Writers' Club.

While Pasternak was getting ready to go I had a chance to look around the simply furnished dining room into which I had been shown. From the moment I had stepped inside I had been struck by the similarity of the house to Leo Tolstoi's house in Moscow which I had visited the day before. The atmosphere in both combined austerity and hospitality in a way which I think must have been characteristic of a Russian intellectual's home in the nineteenth century. The furniture is comfortable, but old and unpretentious. The rooms look ideal for informal entertaining, for children's gatherings, for the studious life. Although it was extremely simple for its period, Tolstoi's house is bigger and more elaborate than Pasternak's, but the unconcern about elegance or display is the same.

Usually, one walks into Pasternak's house through the kitchen, where one is greeted by a tiny, smiling, middle-aged cook who helps to brush the snow off one's clothes. Then comes the dining room with a bay window where geraniums grow. On the walls hang charcoal studies by Leonid Pasternak, the writer's painter father. There are life-studies and portraits. One recognizes Tolstoi, Gorki, Scriabine, Rachmaninov. There are sketches of Boris Pasternak and his brother and sisters as children, of ladies in big hats with veils... it's very much the world of Pasternak's early reminiscences, that of his poems about adolescent love.

Pasternak was soon ready to go. We stepped out into the brilliant sunlight and walked through the evergreen grove behind the house in rather deep snow which sifted into my low-cut boots.

Soon we were on a packed road, much more comfortable for walking although it had treacherous, icy patches. Pasternak took long, lanky steps. On particularly perilous spots he would take my arm, otherwise he gave all his attention to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conversation. Walks are an established part of life in Russia—like drinking tea or lengthy philosophical discussions—a part he apparently loves. We took what was obviously a very round about path to the Writers' Club. The stroll lasted for about forty minutes. He first plunged into an elaborate discussion of the art of translating, prompted by my mentioning that in my, and many others', opinion, *Dr. Zhivago* had been inadequately translated into English. He would stop from time to time to ask about the political and literary situations in France and in the U.S.A. He said that he rarely read papers—"Unless I sharpen my pencil and glance over the sheet of newspaper into which I collect the shavings. This is how I learned last Fall that there was a near revolution against De Gaulle in Algeria, and that Soustelle was ousted—*Sous*telle was *oust*ed," he repeated, emphasizing both his approval of De Gaulle's decision and the similarity in the words. But actually he seemed remarkably well-informed about literary life abroad—it seemed to interest him greatly.

From the first moment I was charmed and impressed by the similarity of Pasternak's speech to his poetry—full of alliterations and unusual images. He related words to each other musically, without however at any time sounding affected or sacrificing the exact meaning. For somebody acquainted with his verse in Russian, to have conversed with Pasternak is a memorable experience. His word-sense was so personal that one felt the conversation was somehow the continuation, the elaboration of a poem, a rushed speech, with waves of words and images following each other in a crescendo.

Later, I remarked to him on the musical quality of his speech. "In writing as in speaking," he said, "the music of the word is never just a matter of sound. It does not result from the harmony of vowels and consonants. It results from the relation between the speech and its meaning. And meaning—content—must always lead."

Often I found it difficult to believe that I was speaking to a man of seventy—Pasternak appeared remarkably young and in good health. There was something a little strange and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forbidding in this youthfulness as if something—was it art?—had mixed itself with the very substance of the man to preserve him. His movements were completely youthful—the gestures of the hands, the manner in which he threw his head back. His friend, the poetess Marina Tsvetayeva, once wrote: "Pasternak looks at the same time like an Arab and like his horse." And indeed, with his dark complexion and somehow archaic features Pasternak did have something of an Arabic face. At certain moments he seemed suddenly to become aware of the impact of his own extraordinary face, of his whole personality. He seemed to withdraw for an instant, half closing his slanted brown eyes, turning his head away, vaguely reminiscent of a horse balking.

I had been told by some writers in Moscow—most of them didn't know him personally—that Pasternak was a man in love with his own image. But then I was told so many contradictory things about him in the few days I spent in Moscow. Pasternak seemed a living legend—a hero for some, a man who had sold out to the enemies of Russia for others. Intense admiration for his poetry among writers and artists was universal. It was the title character of Dr. Zhivago that seemed most controversial. "Nothing but a worn-out intellectual of no interest whatsoever," said a well-known young poet, otherwise very liberal-minded and a great admirer of Pasternak's poetry.

In any event, I found that there was no truth to the charge that Pasternak was an egocentric. On the contrary, he seemed intensely aware of the world around him and reacted to every change of mood in people near him. It is hard to imagine a more perceptive conversationalist. He grasped the most elusive thought at once. The conversation lost all heaviness. Pasternak asked questions about my parents. Although he had seen them but a few times in his life, he remembered everything about them and their tastes. He recalled with surprising exactness some of my father's poems which he had liked. He wanted to know about writers I knew—Russians in Paris, and French, and Americans. American literature seemed particularly to intrigue him, although

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he knew only the important names. I soon discovered that it was difficult to make him talk about himself, which I had hoped he would do.

As we walked in the sunshine, I told Pasternak what interest and admiration *Dr. Zhivago* had aroused in the West and particularly in the United States, despite the fact that the translation into English did not do justice to his book.

"Yes," he said, "I am aware of this interest and I am immensely happy and proud of it. I get an enormous amount of mail from abroad about my work. In fact, it is quite a burden at times, all those inquiries that I have to answer, but then it is indispensable to keep up relations across boundaries. As for the translators of *Dr. Zhivago*, do not blame them too much. It's not their fault. They are used, like translators everywhere, to reproduce the literal sense rather than the tone of what is said—and of course it is the tone that matters. Actually, the only interesting sort of translation is that of classics. There is challenging work. As far as modern writing is concerned, it is rarely rewarding to translate it, although it might be easy. You said you were a painter. Well, translation is very much like copying paintings. Imagine yourself copying a Malevitch, wouldn't it be boring? And that is precisely what I have to do with the well-known Czech surrealist Nezval. He is not really bad, but all this writing of the twenties has terribly aged. This translation which I have promised to finish and my own correspondence take much too much of my time."

Do you have difficulty receiving your mail?

"At present I receive all of it, everything sent me, I assume. There's a lot of it—which I'm delighted to receive, though I'm troubled by the volume of it and the compulsion to answer it all.

"As you can imagine, some of the letters I get about *Dr. Zhivago* are quite absurd. Recently somebody writing about *Dr. Zhivago* in France was inquiring about the plan of the novel. I guess it baffles the French sense of order... But how silly, for the plan of the novel is outlined by the poems accompanying it. This is partly why I chose to publish

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them alongside the novel. They are there also to give the novel more body, more richness. For the same reason I used religious symbolism—to give warmth to the book. Now some critics have gotten so wrapped up in those symbols—which are put in the book the way stoves go into a house, to warm it up—they would like me to commit myself and climb into the stove..."

Have you read Edmund Wilson's critical essays on Dr. Zhivago *in* The New Yorker *and* The New Republic?

"Yes, I have read them and appreciated their perception and intelligence, but you must realize that the novel must not be judged on theological lines. Nothing is further removed from my understanding of the world. One must live and write restlessly, with the help of the new reserves that life offers. I am weary of this notion of faithfulness to a point of view at all cost. Life around us is ever changing and I believe that one should try to change one's slant accordingly—at least once every ten years. The great heroic devotion to one point of view is very alien to me—it's a lack of humility. Mayakovsky killed himself because his pride would not be reconciled with something new happening within himself—or around him."

We had reached a gate beside a long, low wooden fence. Pasternak stopped. He was due there, our conversation had already made him slightly late. I said goodbye with regret. There were so many things that I wanted to ask him right then. Pasternak showed me the way to the railroad station, very close by, downhill behind the little cemetery. A little electric train took me into Moscow in less than an hour. It is the one described so accurately by Pasternak in "Early Trains:"

...And, worshipful, I humbly watch
Old peasant women, Muscovites,
Plain artisans, plain laborers
Young students and suburbanites.

I see no traces of subjection
Born of unhappiness, dismay,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Or want. They bear their daily trials
Like masters who have come to stay

Disposed in every sort of posture
In little knots, in quiet nooks
The children and the young sit still
Engrossed, like experts, reading books

Then Moscow greets us in a mist
Of darkness turning silver grey...

My subsequent two visits with Pasternak merge in my memory into one long literary conversation. Although he declined to give me a formal interview ("For this, you must come back when I am less busy, next Fall perhaps...") he seemed interested in the questions which I wanted to ask him. Except for meals, we were alone, and there were no interruptions. Both times as I was about to leave, Pasternak kissed my hand in the old-fashioned Russian manner, and asked me to come back the following Sunday.

I remember coming to Pasternak's house from the railroad station at dusk, taking a short cut I had learned near the cemetry. Suddenly the wind grew very strong—a snowstorm was beginning. I could see snow flying in great round waves past the station's distant lights. It grew dark very quickly; I had difficulty walking against the wind. I knew this to be customary Russian winter weather, but it was the first real "metol"—snowstorm—I had seen. It recalled poems by Pouchkine and Block and it brought to mind Pasternak's early poems, and the snowstorms of *Dr. Zhivago*. To be in his house a few minutes later, and to hear his elliptical sentences so much like his verse, seemed strange.

I had arrived too late to attend the midday dinner; Pasternak's family had retired, the house seemed deserted. Pasternak insisted that I have something to eat and the cook brought some venison and vodka into the dining room. It was about four o'clock and the room was dark and warm, shut off from the world with only the sound of snow and wind outside.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I was hungry and the food delicious. Pasternak sat across the table from me discussing my grandfather, Leonid Andreyev. He had recently reread some of his stories and liked them. "They bear the stamp of those fabulous Russian nineteen hundreds. Those years are now receding in our memory and yet they loom in the mind like great mountains seen in the distance, enormous. Andreyev was under a Nietzchean spell, he took from Nietzsche his taste for excesses. So did Scriabine. Nietzsche satisfied the Russian longing for the extreme, the absolute. In music and writing, men had to have this enormous scope before they acquired specificity, became themselves."

Pasternak told me about a piece he had recently written for an East-German magazine published in Cologne, on the subject of "What is man?" "How old-fashioned Nietzsche seems, he who was the most important thinker in the days of my youth! What enormous influence—on Wagner, on Gorki... Gorki was impregnated with his ideas. Actually, Nietzsche's principal function was to be the transmitter of the bad taste of his period. It is Kirkegaard, barely known in those years, who was destined to influence deeply our own years. I would like to know the works of Berdyaev better, he is in the same line of thought, I believe—truly a writer of our time."

It grew quite dark in the dining room and we moved to a little sitting room on the same floor where a light was on. Pasternak brought me tangerines for dessert. I ate them with a strange feeling of something already experienced: tangerines appear in Pasternak's work very often—in the beginning of *Dr. Zhivago*, in early poems. They seem to stand for a sort of ritual thirst-quenching. And then there was another vivid evocation of a Pasternak poem, like the snowstorm which blew outside—an open grand piano, black and enormous, filling up most of the room:

> *...and yet we are nearest*
> *In twilight here, the music tossed upon*
> *the fire, year after year, like pages of a diary."**

* *The Trembling Piano*, Themes and Variations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On these walls, as in the dining room, there were sketches by Leonid Pasternak. The atmosphere was both serious and relaxed.

It seemed a good time to ask Pasternak a question which interested me especially. I had heard from people who had seen him while he was working on *Dr. Zhivago* that he rejected most of his early verse as too tentative and dated. I had difficulty believing it. There is a classical perfection to *Themes and Variations* and *My Sister Life*, experimental as they were in the nineteen twenties. I found that writers and poets in Russia knew them by heart and would recite them with fervor. Often one would detect the influence of Pasternak in the verse of young poets. Mayakovsky and Pasternak, each in his own manner, are the very symbol of the years of the Revolution and the nineteen twenties. Then Art and the Revolutionary ideas seemed inseparable. It was enough to let oneself be carried by the wave of overwhelming events and ideas. There were fewer heartbreaking choices to make (and I detected a longing for those years on the part of young Russian intellectuals.) Was it true that Pasternak rejected those early works?

In Pasternak's reply I sensed a note of slight irritation. It might have been because he didn't like to be solely admired for those poems—did he realize perhaps that they are unsurpassable? Or was it the more general weariness of the artist dissatisfied with past achievements, concerned with immediate artistic problems only?

"These poems were like rapid sketches—just compare them with the works of our elders...Dostoievsky and Tolstoi were not just novelists, Block not just a poet. In the midst of literature—the world of commonplaces, conventions, established names—they were three voices which spoke because they had something to say... and it sounded like thunder. As for the facility of the twenties, take my father for example. How much search, what efforts to finish one of his paintings! Our success in the twenties was partly due to chance. My generation found itself in the focal point of history. Our works were dictated by the times. They lacked universality; now they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have aged. Moreover, I believe that it is no longer possible for lyric poetry to express the immensity of our experience. Life has grown too cumbersome, too complicated. We have acquired values which are best expressed in prose. I have tried to express them through my novel, I have them in mind as I write my play."

What about Zhivago? Do you still feel, as you told my parents in 1957, that he is the most significant figure of your work?

"When I wrote *Dr. Zhivago* I had the feeling of an immense debt towards my contemporaries. It was an attempt to repay it. This feeling of debt was overpowering as I slowly progressed with the novel. After so many years of just writing lyric poetry or translating, it seemed to me that it was my duty to make a statement about our epoch—about those years, remote and yet looming so closely over us. Time was pressing. I wanted to record the past and to honor in *Dr. Zhivago* the beautiful and sensitive aspects of the Russia of those years. There will be no return of those days, or of those of our fathers and forefathers, but in the great blossoming of the future I foresee their values will revive. I have tried to describe them. I don't know whether *Dr. Zhivago* is fully successful as a novel, but then with all its faults, I feel it has more value than those early poems. It is richer, more humane than the works of my youth."

Among your contemporaries in the twenties which ones do you think have best endured?

"You know how I feel about Mayakovsky. I have told it at great length in my autobiography, *Safe Conduct*. I am indifferent to most of his later works, with the exception of his last unfinished poem *At the Top of My Voice*. The falling apart of form, the poverty of thought, the unevenness which is characteristic of poetry in that period are alien to me. But there are exceptions. I love all of Essenin, who captures so well the smell of Russian earth. I place Tsvetaieva highest—she was a formed poet from her very beginning. In an age of affectations she had her own voice—human, classical. She was a woman with a man's soul. Her struggle with everyday life gave her strength. She strived and reached perfect clarity.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She is a greater poet than Ahmatova, whose simplicity and lyricism I have always admired. Tsvetaieva's death was one of the great sadnesses of my life."

What about Andrei Beily, so influential in those years?

"Beily was too hermetic, too limited. His scope is comparable to that of chamber music—never greater. If he had really suffered, he might have written the major work of which he was capable. But he never came into contact with real life... Is it perhaps the fate of writers who die young like Beily, this fascination with new forms? I have never understood those dreams of a new language, of a completely original form of expression. Because of this dream, much of the work of the twenties which was but stylistic experimentation has ceased to exist. The most extraordinary discoveries are made when the artist is overwhelmed by what he has to say. Then he uses the old language in his urgency and the old language is transformed from within. Even in those years one felt a little sorry for Beily because he was so cut off from the real life which could have helped his genius to blossom."

What about today's young poets?

"I am impressed by the extent that poetry seems a part of everyday life for Russians. Printings of 20,000 volumes of poetry by young poets are amazing to a Westerner, but actually poetry in Russia is not as alive as you might think. It is fairly limited to a group of intellectuals. And today's poetry is often rather ordinary. It is like the pattern of a wallpaper, pleasant enough but without real *raison d'etre*. Of course some young people show talent—for example Evtouchenko."

Wouldn't you say, however, that the first half of the Russian twentieth century is a time of high achievement in poetry rather than in prose?

"I don't think that's so any longer. I believe that prose is today's medium, elaborate, rich prose like Faulkner's. Today's work must recreate whole segments of life. This is what I am trying to do in my new play. I say trying because everyday life has grown very complicated for me. It must be so any-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where for a well-known writer, but I am unprepared for such a role. I don't like a life deprived of secrecy and quiet. It seems to me that in my youth there was work, an integral part of life which illuminated everything else in it. Now it is something I have to fight for. All those demands by scholars, editors, readers cannot be ignored, but together with the translations they devour my time... You must tell people abroad who are interested in me that this is my only serious problem—this terrible lack of time."

My last visit with Pasternak was a very long one. He had asked me to come early, in order to have a talk before the dinner which was to be a family feast. It was again a sunny Sunday. I arrived shortly before Pasternak had returned from his morning stroll. As I was shown into his study, the house echoed with cheerful voices. Somewhere in the back of it, members of his family were assembled.

Pasternak's study was a large, rather bare room on the second floor. Like the rest of the house it had little furniture—a large desk near the bay window, a couple of chairs, a sofa. The light coming from the window looking over the large snowy field was brilliant. Pinned on the light grey wooden walls there was a multitude of Art postcards. When he came in, Pasternak explained to me that those were all sent to him by readers, mostly from abroad. Many were reproductions of religious scenes—medieval Nativities, St. George killing the dragon, St. Magdalene... They were related to *Doctor Zhivago's* themes.

After his walk, Pasternak looked especially well. He was wearing a collegiate-looking navy blue blazer and was obviously in a good mood. He sat at the desk by the window and placed me across from him. As on other occasions, the atmosphere was relaxed and yet of great concentration. I remember vividly feeling happy—Pasternak looked so gay and the sun through the window was warm. As we sat there for two or more hours, I felt a longing to prolong those moments—I was leaving Moscow the next day—but the bright sunlight flooding the room inexorably faded as the day advanced.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pasternak decided to tell me about his new play. He seemed to do so on the spur of the moment. Quite fascinated, I listened to him—there were few interruptions on my part. Once or twice, unsure, of some historical or literary allusion, I asked him for explanation.

"I think that on account of your background—so close to the events of the Russian nineteenth century—you will be interested in the outlines of my new work. I am working on a trilogy. I have about a third of it written.

"I want to recreate a whole historical era, the nineteenth century in Russia with its main event, the liberation of the serfs. We have, of course, many works about that time, but there is no modern treatment of it. I want to write something panoramic, like Gogol's *Dead Souls*. I hope that my plays will be as real, as involved with everyday life as *Dead Souls*. Although they will be long, I hope that they can be played in one evening. I think that most plays should be cut for staging. I admire the English for knowing how to cut Shakespeare, not just to keep what is essential, but rather to emphasize what is significant. The Comédie-Francaise came to Moscow recently. They don't cut Racine and I feel it is a serious mistake. Only what is expressive today, what works dramatically should be staged.

"My trilogy deals with three meaningful moments in the long process of liberating the serfs. The first play takes place in 1840—that is when unrest caused by serfdom is first felt throughout the country. The old feudal system is outlived but no tangible hope is yet to be seen for Russia. The second one deals with the eighteen-sixties. Liberal landowners have appeared and the best among Russian aristocrats begin to be deeply stirred by western ideas. Unlike the two first plays, which are set in a great country estate, the third part will take place in St. Petersburg in the eighteen-eighties. But this part is but a project yet, while the first and second plays are partially written. I can tell you in more detail about those if you like.

"The first play describes life at its rawest, most trivial, in the manner of the first part of *Dead Souls*. It is existence before it has been touched by any form of spirituality.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Imagine a large estate lost in the heart of rural Russia around 1840. It is in a state of great neglect, nearly bankrupt. The masters of the estate, the Count and his wife are away. They have gone on a trip to spare themselves the painful spectacle of the designation—by means of a lottery—of those among their peasants who must go into the Army. As you know, military service lasted for twenty-five years in Russia in those times. The masters are about to return and the household is getting ready to receive them. In the opening scene we see the servants cleaning house—sweeping, dusting, hanging fresh curtains. There is a lot of confusion, of running around—laughter and jokes among the young servant girls.

"Actually, the times are troubled in this part of the Russian countryside. Soon the mood among the servants becomes more somber. From their conversations we learn that there are hidden bandits in the neighboring woods—they are probably runaway soldiers. We also hear of legends surrounding the estate, like that of the "house killer" from the times of Catherine the Great. She was a sadistic woman, an actual historical figure who took delight in terrifying and torturing her serfs—her crimes so extreme at a time when almost anything was permitted to serf-owners that she was finally arrested.

"The servants also talk about a plaster bust standing high on a cupboard. It is a beautiful young man's head in eighteenth century hair dress. This bust is said to have a magical meaning. Its destinies are linked to those of the estate. It must therefore be dusted with extreme care, lest it be broken.

"The main character in the play is Prokor, the keeper of the estate. He is about to leave for town to sell wood and wheat—the estate lives off such sales—but he joins in the general mood instead of going. He remembers some old masquerade costumes stored away in a closet and decides to play a trick on his superstitious fellow-servants. He dresses himself as a devil—big bulging eyes like a fish. Just as he emerges in his grotesque costume, the masters' arrival is announced. In haste the servants group themselves at the entrance to wel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come the Count and his wife. Proker has no other alternative but to hide himself in a closet.

"As the Count and Countess come in, we begin at once to sense that there is a great deal of tension between them, and we find out that during their trip home the Count has been trying to get his wife to give him her jewels—all that's left besides the mortgaged estate. She has refused, and when he threatened her with violence, a young valet travelling with them defended her—an unbelievable defiance. He hasn't been punished yet, but it's only a question of time before the Count's wrath is unleashed against him.

"As the Count renews his threats against the Countess, the young valet, who has nothing to lose anyway, suddenly reaches for one of the Count's pistols which have just been brought in from the carriage. He shoots at the Count. There is a great panic—servants rushing around and screaming. The plaster statue tumbles down from the cupboard and breaks into a thousand pieces. It wounds one of the young servant girls, blinding her. She is 'The Blind Beauty' for whom the trilogy is named. The title is, of course, symbolic of Russia, oblivious for so long of its own beauty and its own destinies. Although she is a serf, the blind beauty is also an artist; she is a marvelous singer, an important member of the estate's chorus of serfs.

"As the wounded Count is carried out of the room, the Countess, unseen in the confusion, hands her jewels to the young valet who manages to make his escape. It is poor Prokor, still costumed as a devil and hidden in the closet, who is eventually accused of having stolen them. As the Countess does not reveal the truth, he is convicted of the theft and sent to Siberia...

"As you see, all this is very melodramatic, but I think that the theater *should* try to be emotional, colorful... I think everybody's tired of stages where nothing happens... The theater is the art of emotions—it is also that of the concrete. The trend should be towards appreciating melodrama again: Victor Hugo, Schiller...

"I am working now on the second play. As it stands, it's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

broken into separate scenes. The setting is the same estate, but times have changed. We are in 1860, on the eve of the liberation of the serfs. The estate now belongs to a nephew of the Count. He would have already freed his serfs but for his fears of hurting the common cause. He is impregnated with liberal ideas and loves the Arts. And his passion is theater. He has an outstanding theatrical company. Of course, the actors are his serfs, but their reputation extends to all of Russia.

"The son of the young woman blinded in the first play is the principal actor of the group. He is also the hero of this part of the trilogy. His name is Agafon, a marvelously talented actor. The Count has provided him with an outstanding education.

"The play opens with a snow storm..." Pasternak describes it with large movements of his hands. "An illustrious guest is expected at the estate—none other than Alexandre Dumas, then traveling in Russia. He is invited to attend the premiere of a new play. The play is called "The Suicide." I might write it—a play within a play like in Hamlet. I would love to write a melodrama in the taste of the middle of the nineteenth century...

"Alexandre Dumas and his entourage are snowed in at a Relay Station not too far from the estate. A scene takes place there, and who should the Relay-master be but Prokor, the former estate-keeper? He has been back from Siberia for some years—released when the Countess disclosed his innocence on her deathbed. He has become increasingly prosperous running the Relay Station. And yet despite the advent of new times, the scene at the Inn echoes the almost medieval elements of the first play: we see the local executioner and his aides stop at the Inn. They are traveling from the town to their residence deep in the woods—by custom they are not allowed to live near other people.

"A very important scene takes place at the estate when the guests finally arrive there. There is a long discussion about art between Alexandre Dumas and Agafon. This part will illustrate my own ideas about art—not those of the eighteen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sixties, needless to say. Agafon dreams of going abroad, of becoming a Shakespearean actor, to play Hamlet.

"This play has a denoument somehow similar to that of the first one. An obnoxious character whom we first meet at the Relay Station is the local police chief. He is a sort of 'Sobakevitch', the character in *Dead Souls* who personifies humanity at its crudest. Backstage, after the performance of *The Suicide*, he tries to rape one of the young actresses. Defending her, Agafon hits the police chief with a champagne bottle and he has to flee for fear of persecution. The Count, however, helps him, and eventually gets him to Paris.

"In the third play, Agafon comes back to Russia to live in St. Petersburg. No longer a serf (we are now in 1880) he's an extremely successful actor. Eventually he has his mother cured of her blindness by a famous European doctor.

"As for Prokor, in the last play he has become an affluent merchant. I want him to represent the middle class which did so much for Russia at the end of the nineteenth century. Imagine someone like Schukine, who collected all those beautiful paintings in Moscow at the turn of the century. Essentially, what I want to show at the end of the trilogy is just that: the birth of an enlightened and affluent middle class, open to occidental influences, progressive, intelligent, artistic..."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was typical of Pasternak to tell me about his plays in concrete terms, like a libretto. He didn't emphasize the ideas behind the trilogy though it became apparent, after a while, that he was absorbed in ideas about art—not in its historical context, but as an element ever present in life. As he went on, I realized that what he was describing was simply the frame of his new work. Parts of it were completed, others were still to be filled in.

"At first, I consulted all sorts of documents on the nineteenth century. Now I'm finished with research. After all, what is important is not the historical accuracy of the work, but the successful recreation of an era. It is not the object described that matters, but the light that falls on it, like that from a lamp in a distant room..."

Towards the end of his description of his trilogy, Pasternak was obviously hurried. Dinner time was long past. He would glance at his watch from time to time. But despite the fact that he didn't have the opportunity to clarify philosophical implications which would have given body to the strange framework of the dramas, I felt I had been witness to a remarkable evocation of the Russian past...

"*The story of our fathers sounds like the days of the Stuarts*
Further away than Pouchkine and can be seen only in dream"*

As we came down to the dining room, the family already was seated around the large table. "Don't they look like an impressionist painting?" said Pasternak. "With the geraniums in the background and this mid-afternoon light? There is a painting by Simon just like this..."

Everyone stood as we entered and remained standing while Pasternak introduced me around the table. Besides Mme. Pasternak, two of Pasternak's sons were there—his oldest son by his first marriage, and his youngest son, who was eighteen or twenty years old—a handsome boy, dark, with quite a strong resemblance to his mother. He was a student in physics at the Moscow University. Professor Nihaus was

* *From 1905, published in the twenties.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

also a guest. He is a famous Chopin teacher at the Moscow Conservatory to whom Mme. Pasternak had once been married. He was quite elderly, with an old fashioned mustache, very charming and refined. He asked about Paris and musicians we knew there in common. There were also two ladies at the table whose exact relationship to the Pasternak family I didn't learn.

I was seated to the right of Pasternak. Mme. Pasternak was at his left. The table was simply set, covered with a white linen Russian tablecloth embroidered with red cross stitches. The silverware and china were very simple. There was a vase with mimosa in the middle, and bowls of oranges and tangerines. The hors d'oeuvres were already set on the table. Guests passed them to each other while Pasternak poured the vodka. There was caviar, marinated herring, pickles, macedoine of vegetables... The meal progressed slowly. Soon kwass was poured out—a home-made fermented drink usually drunk in the country. Because of fermentation the kwass corks would sometimes pop during the night and wake everybody up—just like a pistol shot, said Mme. Pasternak. After the hors d'oeuvres the cook served a succulent stew made of game.

The conversation was general. Hemingway's works were discussed. Last winter he was one of the most widely read authors in Moscow. A new collection of his writings had just been published. Mme. Pasternak and the ladies at the table remarked that they found Hemingway monotonous—all those endless drinks with little else happening to the heroes.

Pasternak, who had fallen silent for a while, took exception.

"The greatness of a writer has nothing to do with subject matter itself, only with how much the subject matter touches the author. It is the density of style which counts. Through Hemingway's style you feel matter, iron, wood..." He was punctuating his words with his hands, pressing them against the wood of the table. "I admire Hemingway but I prefer what I know of Faulkner. *Light in August* is a marvelous book. The character of the little pregnant woman is unforgettable.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As she walks from Alabama to Tennessee something of the immensity of the South of the United States, of its essence, is captured for us who have never been there."

Later the conversation turned to music. Professor Nihaus and Pasternak discussed fine points of interpretation of Chopin. Pasternak said how much he loved Chopin—"a good example of what I was saying the other day—Chopin used the old Mozartian language to say something completely new—the form was reborn from within. Nonetheless I am afraid that Chopin is considered a little oldfashioned in the United States. I gave a piece on Chopin to Stephen Spender which was not published."

I told him how much Gide loved to play Chopin—Pasternak didn't know this and was delighted to hear it. The conversation moved on to Proust, whom Pasternak was slowly reading at that time.

"Now that I am coming to the end of 'A La Recherche du Temps Perdu,' I am struck by how it echoes some of the ideas which absorbed us in 1910. I put them into a lecture about 'Symbolism and Immortality' which I gave on the day before Leo Tolstoi died and I went to Astapovo with my father. Its text has long been lost, but among many other things on the nature of symbolism it said that, although the artist will die, the happiness of living which he has experienced is immortal. If it is captured in a personal and yet universal form it can actually be relived by others through his work...

"I have always liked French literature," he continued. "Since the war I feel that French writing has acquired a new accent, less rhetoric. Camus' death is a great loss for all of us." (Earlier, I had told Pasternak of Camus' tragic end which took place just before I came to Moscow. It was not written up in the Russian press. Camus is not translated into Russian.) "In spite of differences of themes, French literature is now much closer to us. But French writers when they commit themselves to political causes are particularly unattractive. Either they are cliquish and insincere or with their French sense of logic they feel they have to carry out

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their beliefs to their conclusion. They fancy they must be absolutists like Robespierre or Saint-Just."

Tea and cognac were served at the end of the meal. Pasternak looked tired suddenly and became silent. As always during my stay in Russia I was asked many questions about the West—about its cultural life and our daily existence.

Lights were turned on. I looked at my watch to discover that it was long past six o'clock. I had to go. I felt very tired, too.

Pasternak walked me to the door, through the kitchen. We said goodbye outside on the little porch in the blue snowy evening. I was terribly sad at the thought of not returning to Peredelkino. Pasternak took my hand in his and held it for an instant, urging me to come back very soon. He asked me once again to tell his friends abroad that he was well, that he remembered them even though he hadn't time to answer their letters. I had already walked down the porch and into the path when he called me back. I was happy to have an excuse to stop, to turn back, to have a last glimpse of Pasternak standing bare-headed, in his blue blazer under the door light.

"Please," he called, "don't take what I have said about letters personally. Do write to me, in any language you prefer. I will answer you."

—OLGA CARLISLE

(This is the twenty-fifth of a series of interviews on the Art of Fiction. Other writers interviewed are E. M. Forster, Thornton Wilder, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Alberto Moravia, François Mauriac, Henry Green, James Jones and others. Future issues will have interviews with W. Somerset Maugham, Kingsley Amis and Jean Cocteau. We will continue our series on the Art of Poetry with Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, and Robert Lowell.)

drawings by Olga Carlisle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FACES FROM A BESTIARY

(Suggested by the twelfth century *Livre des Créatures* of Philip de Thaun)

1

The Lion sleeps with open eyes
That none may take him by surprise.
The Son of God he signifies

For when a Lion stillborn lies
His mother circles him and cries—
Then on the third day he will rise.

2

Hyena is a beast to hate.
No man hath seen him copulate.
He is unto himself a mate.

You who this creature emulate,
Who with your mirrors fornicate,
Do not repent. It is too late.

—X. J. KENNEDY

EARTH AND AIR

The high elms provide
A pillared avenue
Where only birds parade,
Black in the early mist.
The tower clock strikes, low,
Stirring the ochre host,
Once green—your bosky view,
Whose clock you are, whose waste,
Autumnal and denied.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dear Zeno, I have spent
My mind on landscapes, found
Your perfect argument
Cascaded in steep air
Where granite passes bound
My vision, and desire
Played out in stony ground.
Now through these elms, more sure,
I know your cold content.

Change cannot touch the earth.
The leaves, turning, remain
Condemned to their late worth,
Being of nothing made
Which nothing need sustain.
Trees, men, events, the shade
Of summer and the grain
Industriously flayed,
Endure a lasting birth.

We grow too slow for fact.
The terror of pure sight,
The knowledge we reject
To make our passage wise,
Becomes a sparrow's flight.
Blue mist becomes bright haze.
And deathly leaves, delight
Flooding tentative eyes
Whose motion is exact.

—LEE GERLACH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JAN GERHARD TOONDER

THE TIME WE WILL

HE was a stranger in this small town. He knew nobody here and from the moment that he left the railway-station in that dark night, he was overcome by a feeling of being very much alone; the emptiness of an unknown provincial town on the last evening of the year is colder and larger than any other form of loneliness. While he was looking for the right street and in that street for the house where he had to go, he thought that now most people were sitting inside behind closed curtains, drinking wine and eating oil-dumplings—friends gathered together, families united—and nobody had business in the silence of the night; nobody but he was looking for an address.

Any other night than New Year's Eve would probably have been better suited for the message he had to deliver, but it so happened that between two voyages, and on this particular

drawing by Michael Biddle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

night he had nothing else to do. He found the house and rang the bell, and after a few minutes rang again. After some time the door was opened by a young woman who looked at him silently, waiting for him to speak.

"Does Horner live here?" the stranger asked.

"Yes."

"I have a message."

"What is it?"

"I can hardly tell you here—perhaps I'd better come in for a moment." He was afraid that she would refuse and so walked past her into the hallway. She was not exactly curt or hostile or even suspicious, but she gave the impression of being too tired to be surprised or to want anything—too tired, extinguished, almost lifeless.

In the room under the glow of the light she was different. She moved around and talked and seemed almost human. The table had been set for three people; there was an old-fashioned cooking-stove on which stood a pan with oil and a bowl with dough, and there she continued baking oil-dumplings as if the stranger were a daily visitor. With her monotonous voice she said:

"Sit down. Now what is it?"

He did not answer immediately. After the raw, clear wintry air outside, the fat oilsmoke in the room seemed suffocating. An old man slept in an armchair, and at his elbow was a noisily ticking alarm-clock that pointed to a much later time than the stranger had expected. She dipped a dumpling in the boiling oil.

"Now what is it?" she repeated.

"I saw Jef."

"Jef," she said tonelessly. Thoughtfully she put down the mould and turned towards him and he saw that her eyes had lost their dullness now. "Is he coming?" she asked.

"No—not that," he said.

She didn't ask anything else but resumed her baking. It was as if the stranger had just passed by to bring greetings, but that wasn't true; he still had a lot to say; important things.

"Jef looked splendid," he began embarrassedly.

"I'm glad to hear that," she said. "I have to go on baking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meanwhile, for at five to twelve the alarm-clock will ring and the old man will wake up. I must be ready then."

"You're expecting visitors, I see," he looked at the third plate on the table. With other people around it would be impossible to talk.

"No—that third plate... that's something we do." A new dumpling entered the pan and through the sound of sizzling she said monotonously "You'll think we're mad. Everybody thinks we're mad. You'll think it too—but we aren't."

"No, of course not" he replied hurriedly.

"That third plate is for Jef. I know he isn't here and still we set his plate—his father and I; we have done it for five years now, on his birthday and at Christmas and on New Year's Eve. People think we're mad. Jef isn't here, they say; and we know that, but still there is Jef's plate, and there are oil-dumplings for him and there is a glass of wine for him; and at five to twelve that alarm-clock rings and then we sit at the table until the New Year and then he is with us. At midnight he is there. Do you understand?"

"Yes—yes, of course."

"You'll suppose that we're mad—but still he is there, for we'll be thinking of him. We concentrate on thinking of him and nothing else, at twelve o'clock sharp; and wherever he may be in the world he is thinking of us at the same moment. We're not mad. We know that we don't see and hear him—but he is there, he is there. We don't talk. We're together for a moment."

She said all this very quickly and monotonously as if she were reciting a lesson, and then added once more; "That's why people think we're mad."

The stranger nodded, but he didn't know what was best; to let these two lonely people live in their illusion or to take it away from them. He said slowly;

"I met Jef three months ago in Antofagasta."

"Anto-fa-gasta," she repeated, to learn the outlandish name by heart.

"It's on the West coast of South America—it's quite far from here."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes—very far."

He thought he saw a way now to prepare her for his message, a mild but conclusive way to demonstrate the foolishness of this game of magic. "In Antofagasta it is about five hours earlier than it is here." He said. "There are different times in the world, you see? He was thinking about going to Auckland or New Zealand—and perhaps he has by now. But in New Zealand it is seven or eight hours later than it is here."

A first he thought she didn't understand; nothing changed about her, she didn't reply. But then slowly she took the pan with boiling oil from the stove, she pushed the third plate aside, and at last, hesitantly, she went over to the old man, and, taking the alarm-clock, pulled the lever so that it would not ring at five to twelve. The delivery of the message had been made much simpler than he had supposed it would be and that made him feel sick.

Sitting opposite him at the table she said softly—so softly that he had to bend over to understand her, "I've always known that, but I never stopped to consider it. His father and I, we are mad. Anto-fa-gasta. When it's midnight here, it's just evening there, and in that other place, that other one—it's the next morning already there. I read such a thing one time or the other but I never thought about it; but then we are mad, for we know that he is here on such a moment and it is impossible. He's asleep when we think of him; when he thinks of us we're asleep. It can never be the same moment, for he is somewhere, somewhere in the world..."

The stranger didn't know what to say. She ought to have wept for her lost illusion, or perhaps with relief she should have laughed. It was weird that she did neither but just related the symptoms of their delusion.

"So it is impossible," she continued lifelessly. "We agreed upon it when he left—you know that he had to flee the country, don't you? They said he was a criminal. Nobody wants part of us. We love him. We... we love him."

"Yes."

"It was right that he fled. I knew that he never could write —there ought to be no trace of him; nothing should ever

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arrive from him. And then he said; we'll think of each other, in such a way, then and then — and so we won't lose each other. Until once..."

"Yes."

"We have no friends left. There's nobody, just him. There's nothing—nothing. And we are mad. We just imagined something. I've always known it but I wanted to imagine it, to be able... to be able... to live..."

But was she really alive? Her face was empty, swept clear of all expression it might have had. It remained empty now, too, while she sat opposite him without looking at him and without speaking.

"That alarm-clock..." he said. The alarm-clock pointed to seven to twelve.

"Leave him alone. Somewhere in the middle of the night he will wake up. It will be easier to explain when it is all over.. I think. Not now."

What he wanted was to say everything fast now and then leave quickly, never to know what he had done to her and to the sleeping old man. Quickly, before the clock-hand reached twelve and she would probably lose that fixed vacancy that until now had covered what had to be a grief too great for expression. But he couldn't do it. He watched the second-hand of the clock tick round a minute, an endless minute, a far too short minute out of his life and hers—and once more a part of time went ticking away and the hand pointed five to twelve. The bell did not ring but still the old man opened his eyes, sat up, and said with a sharp, thin voice; "It is time. And there is a stranger here."

She wasn't startled as the stranger was, but said very fast and without turning around, "Yes. He met Jef and Jef is somewhere in South America. And this man says that it is much earlier there than it is here, or much later. It is another time there."

Slowly, with jerking movements, the old man stood up. Grim lines moved in his furious face but his sharp, almost white eyes were fixed on the stranger when he shouted; "It's rot! You want evil—you want evil. I feel it! Time is time, it is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there or it isn't! It is time here and it is time there, everywhere it is time. It is our time. It is Jef's and mine and hers! We will it! Go away—you want evil! Go away—we have to be alone. It is time."

The stranger looked at her, but she stared up at the raving old man and smiled and said clearly, "Jef's and his and mine... we *will* it. Go away." She put the third plate in its place again; and in that deep silence, under the force of his mad eyes and the regained certainty in her smile, he went without farewell, quickly, before the hand would touch twelve.

But outside, in those silent streets, there was not, as he had expected, that sudden uproar of ringing bells and screaming ships' sirens, nor of drums and fireworks with which people greet a New Year on their calendar; it remainded quiet, and a clock in a churchtower showed him that it was twenty minutes past eleven.

So, in the house he had just fled, the two fools must be sitting together now in their double foolishness; celebrating a New Year that hadn't arrived yet, with the third at the table a nothing, a phantom, their love. The alarm-clock had gained forty minutes and they were too ill and queer to notice it, the stranger thought. Their's was the time they willed and that was the reality in which they lived and perhaps they were right after all. And thinking this the stranger felt suddenly thankful that he had not delivered Jef's message, that he had not told them to forget a Jef who would never return, who wanted to lead a new and different life without them. Who knew what he really thought and where he was, in what country and with what time? He shivered in the cold and thought: who knows about time but that in eternity it cannot exist?

He found the station closed and deserted. He felt lonely and more of a stranger than ever, perhaps a bit evil. At twelve o'clock the churchbells chimed and the streets of the quiet small town resounded with the gay voices of neighbors exchanging their good wishes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WITH GOOD HUMOR

New face, strange face, for my unrest.
I hunt your look, and lust marks time
Dark in his doubtful uniform,
Preparing once more for the test.

You do not know you are observed:
Apart, contained, you wait on chance,
Or seem to, till your callous glance
Meets mine, as callous and reserved.

And as it does we recognize
That sharing an anticipation
Amounts to a collaboration—
A warm game for a warmer prize.

Yet when I've had you once or twice
I may not want you any more:
A single night is plenty for
Every magnanimous device.

Why should that matter? Why pretend
Love must accompany erection?
This is a momentary affection,
A curiosity bound to end,

Which as good-humored muscle may
Against the muscle try its strength
—Exhausted into sleep at length—
And will not last long into day.

—THOM GUNN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Leonor Fini

"By what words, O writer, could you match the perfection of all the order found here in this drawing? I advise you not to encumber yourself with words, unless you are speaking to the blind... do not busy yourself with filling the ear with things that relate to the eye: in this task you will be surpassed by far by the work of the painter..."

These words of Leonardo da Vinci might serve as a warning against commentary on the works of any artist, yet his challenge seems especially mocking as we look at the drawings of Leonor Fini. Sharp, incisive, precise, her work seems constantly to reach behind words to the very thing itself, driving back any possible exposition to the nebulous zones of approximation, the refuge of metaphor and simile, the "almost like." Leonor Fini's pen has the subtlety and tenuousness of the spider's thread, the swiftness of an arrow abandoning to the sky the immaterial curve of its lightning flight.

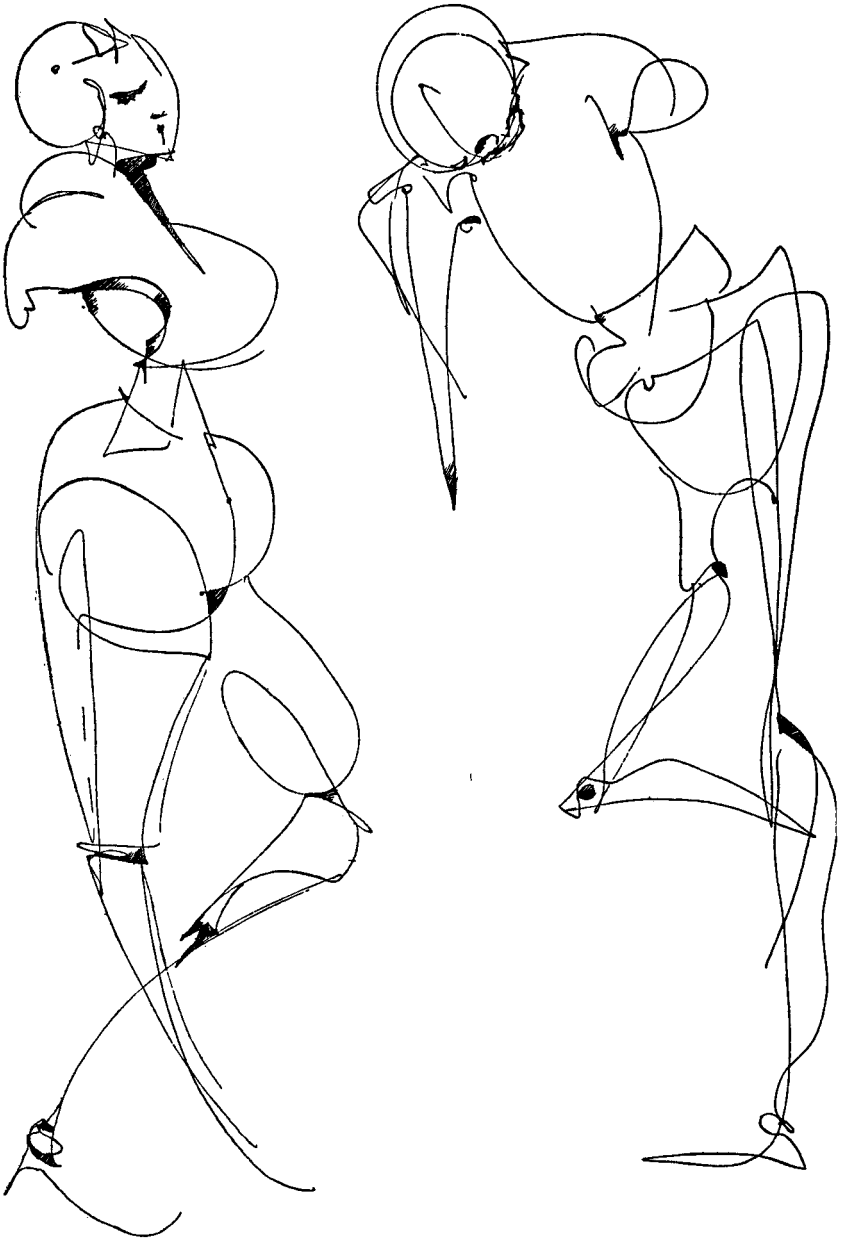
Born in Argentina, Leonor Fini can number Venetians, Neapolitans, Spaniards, Germans, and Slavs among her ancestors. She lives in Paris where her stage designs, her own masques, her portraits are better known to the general public than her painting. She is, perhaps, a "painters' painter" and a "poets' painter:" Paul Eluard, Jean Genet, Max Ernst, Jacques Audiberti, Giorgio di Chirico, Marcel Jouhandeau are among those who have written poems and essays about her work.

Here in these drawings one sees an extraordinary closeness, an intimate complicity, between this woman of such decided and powerful originality and the form, the silhouette, the profile which appears suddenly on the paper as if it were the magic impression of an imaginary and secret vision. This vision is multiple, expressing itself in multiple disguises: bodies or skeletons, faces, heads with wide hollow sockets, skulls oval like an egg and as bare, birds, fabulous animals, illusions... Under the masks of beauty and precision, wandering sometimes into the vertiginous abyss of horror, her drawings are the projection into this world of a secret universe whose Protean stirrings or entranced stillness are the swollen images of desire. In this sense the drawings of Leonor Fini are erotic: if ecstasy, pleasure, and death could somehow describe themselves, it would be in characters of this sort.

L. H.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

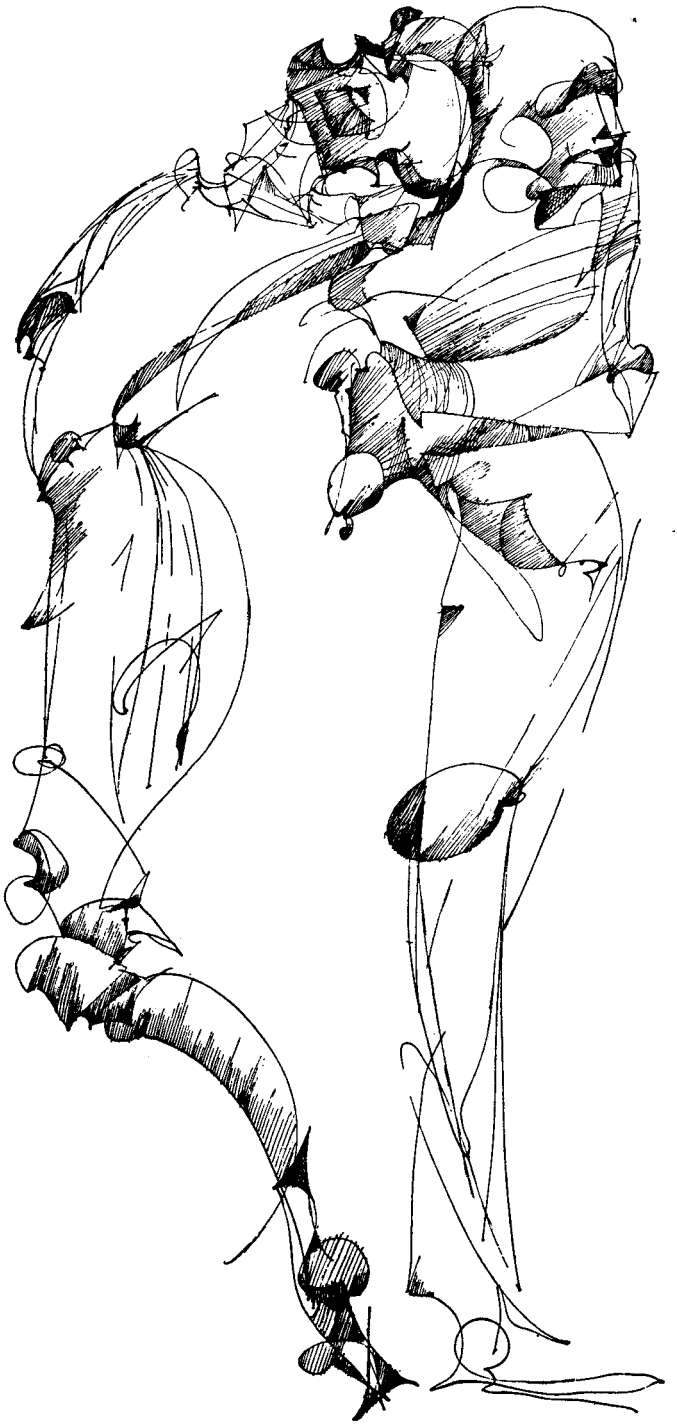
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I only say it as worth thinking of
But loyalty in friendship and in love
Is unless life there might be a different thing
From what it is anything need to be O King.

I do not like the way you shuffle your eyes
When you say that," the King replies.
"I stand up and say it." The Vizier stood up
So suddenly he overset his cup.

Never more dangerous than when affable
The King enjoys the moment to the full
He looks from face to face all down the board
To see with whom he has of hand scored.

The statesman stumbled: "I don't know how it started
This argument. But would you call it false-hearted
The one who from devising dreads a fraction
Some attachment up for an attraction?"
"You stand upon your right of extraction.
You won't be bogged down in any situation.
Just what are you preparing to forsake
Before you tell us so we stay awake."
The hen quail's eyes would be awake with fear
Of what was happening to the Vizier.
Their only comfort in the second thought
That they were not the traitors being caught

—*Some stanzas in manuscript of an unpublished Robert Frost poem*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Drawing by Hans Beck

THE ART OF POETRY II

ROBERT FROST

About five minutes after Mrs. Theodore Morrison had shown us into the front room of Frost's house in Cambridge, Massachusetts, we heard him coming down the stairs. He came into the room casually dressed, wearing high, plaid slippers, and greeted us with a quiet, even diffident friendliness. But there was no mistaking the evidence of the enormous power of his personality. It makes you at once aware of the thick, compacted strength of his body, even now at eighty-six; it is apparent in his face, actually too alive and spontaneously expressive to be as ruggedly heroic as in his photographs.

The impression of massiveness, far exceeding his physical size, isn't separable from the public image he creates and preserves. That this image is invariably associated with popular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conceptions of New England is no simple matter of his own geographical preferences. New England is of course evoked in the scenes and titles of many of his poems and, more importantly, in his Emersonian tendencies, including his habit of contradicting himself, his capacity to "unsay" through the sound of his voice what his words seem to assert. His special resemblance to New England, however, is that he, like it, has managed to impose upon the world a wholly self-created image. It is not the critics who have defined him, it is Frost himself. He stood talking for a few minutes in the middle of the room, his remarkably ample, tousled white hair catching the late afternoon sun reflected off the snow in the road outside, and one wondered for a moment how he had managed over so long a life never to let his self-portrait be altered despite countless exposures to light less familiar and unintimidating. In the public world he has resisted countless chances to lose himself in some particular fashion, some movement, like the Georgians, or even in an area of his own work which, to certain critics or readers, happens for the moment to appear more exotically colorful than the whole. In one of the most revealing parts of this interview, he says of certain of his poems that he doesn't "want them out," the phrase itself, since all the poems involved have been published, offering an astonishing, even peculiar, evidence of the degree to which he feels in control of his poetic character. It indicates, too, his awareness that attempts to define him as a tragic, philosophical poet of man and nature can be more constricting, because more painfully meaningful to him, than the simpler definitions they are designed to correct.

More specifically, he seemed at various points to find the most immediate threat to his freedom in the tape recorder. Naturally, for a man both voluble and often mischievous in his recollections, Frost did not like the idea of being stuck, as he necessarily would be, with attitudes expressed in two hours of conversation. As an aggravation of this, he knew that no transcript taken from the tape could catch the subtleties of voice which give life and point to many of his statements. At a pause in the interview, Mr. Robert O'Clair, a friend and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

colleague at Harvard who had agreed to sit in as a sort of witness, admitted that we knew very little about running a tape recorder. Frost, who'd moved from his chair to see its workings, readily agreed: "Yes, I noticed that," he laughed, "and I respect you for it," adding at once—and this is the point of the story—that "they," presumably the people "outside," "like to hear me say nasty things about machines." A thoroughly supple knowledge of the ways in which the world tries to take him and a confidence that his own ways are more just and liberating was apparent here and everywhere in the conversation.

Frost was seated most of the time in a blue overstuffed chair which he had bought to write in. It had no arms, he began, and this left him the room he needed...

FROST

I never write except with a writing board. I've never had a table in my life. And I use all sorts of things. Write on the sole of my shoe.

INTERVIEWER

Why have you never liked a desk? Is it because you've moved around so much and lived in so many places?

FROST

Even when I was younger I never had a desk. I've never had a writing room.

INTERVIEWER

Is Cambridge your home base now pretty much?

FROST

In the winter. But I'm nearly five months in Ripton, Vermont. I make a long summer up there. But this is my office and business place.

INTERVIEWER

Your place in Vermont is near the Bread Loaf School of Writing, isn't it?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROST

Three miles away. Not so near I know it's there. I'm a way off from it, down the mountain and up a side road. They connect me with it a good deal more than I'm there. I give a lecture at the school and a lecture at the conference. That's about all.

INTERVIEWER

You were a co-founder of the School weren't you?

FROST

They say that. I think I had more to do with the starting of the Conference. In a very casual way, I said to the President (of Middlebury), "Why don't you use the place for a little sociability after the school is over?" I thought of no regular business—no pay, no nothing, just inviting literary people, a few, for a week or two. The kitchen staff was still there. But then they started a regular business of it.

INTERVIEWER

When you were in England from 1912–15, did you ever think you might possibly stay there?

FROST

No. No, I went over there to be poor for a while, nothing else. I didn't think of printing a book over there. I'd never offered a book to any one here. I was thirty-eight years old, wasn't I? Something like that. And I thought the way to a book was the magazines. I hadn't too much luck with them, and nobody ever noticed me except to send me a check now and then. So I didn't think I was ready for a book. But I had written three books when I went over, the amount of three books—*A Boy's Will*, *North of Boston*, and part of the next (*Mountain Interval*) in a loose-leaf heap.

INTERVIEWER

What were the circumstances of your meeting Pound when you were in England?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROST

That was through Frank Flint. The early Imagist and translator. He was a friend of Pound and belonged in that little group there. He met me in a book store, said, "American?" And I said, "Yes. How'd you know?" He said, "Shoes." It was the Poetry Book Shop, Harold Monroe's, just being organized. He said, "Poetry?" And I said, "I accept the omen." Then he said, "You should know your fellow-countryman, Ezra Pound." And I said, "I've never heard of him." And I hadn't. I'd been skipping literary magazines—I don't ever read them very much—and the gossip, you know, I never paid much attention to. So he said. "I'm going to tell him you're here." And I had a card from Pound afterwards. I didn't use it for two or three months after that.

INTERVIEWER

He saw your book—*A Boy's Will*—just before publication, didn't he? How did that come about?

FROST

The book was already in the publishers' hands, but it hadn't come out when I met Pound, three or four months after he sent me his card. I didn't like the card very well.

INTERVIEWER

What did he say on it?

FROST

Just said, "At home, sometimes." Just like Pound. So I didn't feel that that was a very warm invitation. Then one day walking past Church Walk in Kensington, I took his card out and went in to look for him. And I found him there, a little put out that I hadn't come sooner, in his Poundian way. And then he said, "Flint tells me you have a book." And I said, "Well, I ought to have." He said, "You haven't seen it?" And I said, "No." He said, "What do you say we go and get a copy?" He was eager about being the first one to talk. That's one of the best things you can say about Pound: he wanted to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be the first to jump. Didn't call people up on the telephone to see how they were going to jump. He was all silent with eagerness. We walked over to my publisher; he got the book. Didn't show it to me—put it in his pocket. We went back to his room. He said, "You don't mind our liking this?" in his British accent, slightly. And I said, "Oh, go ahead and like it." Pretty soon he laughed at something, and I said I knew where that was in the book, what Pound would laugh at. And then pretty soon he said, "You better run along home, I'm going to review it." And I never touched it. I went home without my book and he kept it. I'd barely seen it in his hands.

INTERVIEWER

He wrote perhaps the first important favorable review, didn't he?

FROST

Yes. It was printed in the States, in Chicago, but it didn't help me much in England. The reviewing of the book there began right away, as soon as it was out. I guess most of those who reviewed it in England didn't know it had already been reviewed in Chicago. It didn't sound as though they did. But his review had something to do with the beginning of my reputation. I've always felt a little romantic about all that—that queer adventure he gave me. You know he had a mixed, a really curious position over there. He was friends with Yeats, Hueffer, and a very few others.

INTERVIEWER

Did you know Hueffer?

FROST

Yes, with him. And Yeats, with him.

INTERVIEWER

How much did you see of Yeats when you were in England?

FROST

Oh, quite a little, with him nearly always—I guess always.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERVIEWER

Did you feel when you left London to go live on a farm in Gloucestershire that you were making a choice against the kind of literary society you'd found in the city?

FROST

No, my choices had been not connected with my going to England even. My choice was almost unconscious in those days. I didn't know whether I had any position in the world at all, and I wasn't choosing positions. You see, my instinct was not to belong to any gang, and my instinct was against being confused with the—what do you call them?—they called themselves Georgians, Edwardians, something like that, the people Edward Marsh was interested in. I understand that he speaks of me in his book, but I never saw him.

INTERVIEWER

Was there much of a gang feeling among the literary people you knew in London?

FROST

Yes. Oh, yes. Funny over there. I suppose it's the same over here. I don't know. I don't "belong" here. But they'd say, "Oh, he's that fellow that writes about homely things for that crowd, for those people. Have you anybody like that in America?" As if it were set, you know. Like Masefield—they didn't know Masefield in this gang, but, "Oh, he's that fellow that does this thing, I believe, for that crowd."

INTERVIEWER

Your best friend in those years was Edward Thomas?

FROST

Yes—quite separate again from everybody his age. He was as isolated as I was. Nobody knew he wrote poetry. He didn't write poetry until he started to war, and that had something to do with my life with him. We got to be great friends. No, I had an instinct against belonging to any of those crowds.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I've had friends, but very scattering, a scattering over there. You know, I could have... Pound had an afternoon meeting once a week with Flint and Aldington and H. D. and at one time Hulme, I think. Hulme started with them. They met every week to rewrite each other's poems.

INTERVIEWER

You saw Hulme occasionally? Was it at these rewriting sessions, or didn't you bother with them?

FROST

Yes, I knew Hulme, knew him quite well. But I never went to one of those meetings. I said to Pound, "What do you do?" He said, "Rewrite each other's poems." And I said, "Why?" He said, "To squeeze the water out of them." "That sounds like a parlor game to me," I said, "and I'm a serious artist" —kidding, you know. And he laughed and he didn't invite me any more.

INTERVIEWER

These personal associations that you had in England with Pound and Edward Thomas and what you call the Georgians —these had nothing to do with your establishing a sense of your own style, did they? You'd already written what were to be nearly the first three volumes of your poetry.

FROST

Two and a half books, you might say. There are some poems out in Huntington Library that I must have written in the Nineties. The first one of mine that's still in print was in '90. It's in print still, kicking round.

INTERVIEWER

Not in *A Boy's Will*—the earliest poem published in there was written in '94, I think.

FROST

No, it's not in there. First one I ever *sold* is in there. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

first one I ever had printed was the first one I wrote. I never wrote prose or verse till 1890. Before that I wrote Latin and Greek sentences.

INTERVIEWER

Some of the early critics like Garnett and Pound talk a lot about Latin and Greek poetry with reference to yours. You'd read a lot in the Classics?

FROST

Probably more Latin and Greek than Pound ever did.

INTERVIEWER

Didn't you teach Latin at one time?

FROST

Yes. When I came back to college after running away, I thought I could stand it if I stuck to Greek and Latin and philosophy. That's all I did those years.

INTERVIEWER

Did you read much in the Romantic poets? Wordsworth, in particular?

FROST

No, you couldn't pin me there. Oh, I read all sorts of things. I said to some Catholic priests the other day when they asked me about reading, I said, "If you understand the word 'catholic,' I was very catholic in my taste."

INTERVIEWER

What sort of things did your mother read to you?

FROST

That I wouldn't be able to tell you. All sorts of things, not too much, but some. She was a very hard-worked person—she supported us. Born in Scotland, but grew up in Columbus, Ohio. She was a teacher in Columbus for seven years—in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mathematics. She taught with my father one year after he left Harvard and before he went to California. You know they began to teach in high schools in those days right after coming out of high school themselves. I had teachers like that who didn't go to college. I had two noted teachers in Latin and Greek who weren't college women at all. They taught Fred Robinson.* I had the same teachers he had. Fritz Robinson, the old scholar. My mother was just like that. Began teaching at eighteen in the high school, then married along about twenty-five. I'm putting all this together rather lately, finding out strolling round like I do. Just dug up in Pennsylvania the date of her marriage and all that, in Lewistown, Pennsylvania.

INTERVIEWER

Your mother ran a private school in Lawrence, Massachusetts, didn't she?

FROST

Yes, she did, round Lawrence. She had a private school. And I taught in that some, as well as taking some other schools. I'd go out and teach in district schools whenever I felt like springtime.

INTERVIEWER

How old were you then?

FROST

Oh, just after I'd run away from Dartmouth, along there in '93, '4, twenty years old. Every time I'd get sick of the city I'd go out for the springtime and take school for one term. I did that I think two or three times, that same school. Little school with twelve children, about a dozen children, all barefooted. I did newspaper work in Lawrence, too. I followed my father and mother in that, you know. I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself to earn a living. Taught a little, worked on a paper a little, worked on farms a little that was my own departure. But I just followed my parents in newspaper work.

* *Editor of Chaucer, and formerly a professor of English at Harvard.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I edited a paper a while—a weekly paper—and then I was on a regular paper. I see its name still up there in Lawrence.

INTERVIEWER

When you started to write poetry, was there any poet that you admired very much?

FROST

I was the enemy of that theory, that idea of Stevenson's that you should play the sedulous ape to anybody. That did more harm to American education than anything ever got out.

INTERVIEWER

Did you ever feel any affinity between your work and any other poet's?

FROST

I'll leave that for somebody else to tell me. I wouldn't know.

INTERVIEWER

But when you read Robinson or Stevens, for example, do you find anything that is familiar to you from your own poetry?

FROST

Wallace Stevens? He was years after me.

INTERVIEWER

I mean in your reading of him, whether or not you felt any—

FROST

Any affinity, you mean? Oh, you couldn't say that. No. Once he said to me, "You write on subjects." And I said, "You write on bric-a-brac." And when he sent me his next book he'd written "S'more bric-a-brac" in it. Just took it good naturedly. No, I had no affinity with him. We were friends. Oh, gee, miles away. I don't know who you'd connect me with.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERVIEWER

Well, you once said in my hearing that Robert Lowell had tried to connect you with Faulkner, told you you were a lot like Faulkner.

FROST

Did I say that?

INTERVIEWER

No, you said that Robert Lowell told you that you were a lot like Faulkner.

FROST

Well, you know what Robert Lowell said once? He said, "My uncle's dialect—the New England dialect, *The Bigelow Papers*—was just the same as Burns's, wasn't it?" I said, "Robert! Burns's was not a dialect, Scotch is not a dialect. It's a language." But he'd say anything, Robert, for the hell of it.

INTERVIEWER

You've never, I take it then, been aware of any particular line of preference in your reading?

FROST

Oh, I read 'em all. One of my points of departure is an anthology. I find a poet I admire, and I think, well, there must be a lot to that. Some old one—Shirley, for instance, "The glories of our blood and state"—that sort of splendid poem. I go looking for more. Nothing. Just a couple like that and that's all. I remember certain boys took an interest in certain poems with me in old times. I remember Brower one day in somebody else's class when he was a student at Amherst —Reuben Brower, afterwards the Master of Adams House at Harvard. I remember I said, "Anyone want to read that poem to me?" It was "In going to my naked bed as one that would have slept," Edwards's old poem. He read it so well I said, "I give you A for life." And that's the way we joke with each other. I never had him regularly in a class of mine. I visited

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other classes up at Amherst and noticed him very early. Goodness sake, the way his voice fell into those lines, the natural way he did that very difficult poem with that old quotation—"The falling out of faithful friends is the renewing of love." I'm very catholic, that's about all you can say. I've hunted. I'm not thorough like the people educated in Germany in the old days. I've none of that. I hate the idea that you ought to read the whole of anybody. But I've done a lot of looking sometimes, read quite a lot.

INTERVIEWER

When you were in England did you find yourself reading the kind of poetry Pound was reading?

FROST

No. Pound was reading the troubadours.

INTERVIEWER

Did you talk to one another about any particular poets?

FROST

He admired at that time, when I first met him, Robinson and De La Mare. He got over admiring De La Mare anyway, and I think he threw out Robinson too. We'd just bring up a couple of little poems. I was around with him quite a little for a few weeks. I was charmed with his ways. He cultivated a certain rudeness to people that he didn't like, just like Willy Whistler. I thought he'd come under the influence of Whistler. They cultivated the French style of boxing. They used to kick you in the teeth.

INTERVIEWER

With grace.

FROST

Yes. You know the song, the nasty song: "They fight with their feet—" Among other things, what Pound did was show me Bohemia.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERVIEWER

Was there much Bohemia to see at that time?

FROST

More than I had ever seen. I'd never had any. He'd take me to restaurants and things. Showed me jiu jitsu in a restaurant. Threw me over his head.

INTERVIEWER

Did he do that?

FROST

Wasn't ready for him at all. I was just as strong as he was. He said, "I'll show you, I'll show you. Stand up." So I stood up, gave him my hand. He grabbed my wrist, tipped over backwards and threw me over his head.

INTERVIEWER

How did you like that?

FROST

Oh, it was all right. Everybody in the restaurant stood up. He used to talk about himself as a tennis player. I never played tennis with him. And then he'd show you all these places with these people that specialized in poets that dropped their aitches and things like that. Not like the "beatniks," quite. I remember one occasion they had a poet in who had a poem in *The English Review* on Aphrodite, how he met Aphrodite at Leatherhead.* He was coming in and he was a navvy. I don't remember his name, never heard of him again—may have gone on and had books. But he was a real navvy. Came in with his bicycle clips on. Tea party. Everybody horrified in a delighted way, you know. Horror, social horror. Rednecked,

* *Frost is thinking of a poet named John Helston, author of "Aphrodite at Leatherhead," which took up fourteen pages of* The English Review *for March 1913. Frost's recollection gives a special flavor, if one is needed, to the note appended to the poem by the editors of the magazine: "Without presuming to 'present' Mr. Helston after the manner of fashionable actors, we think it will interest the public to know that he was for years a working mechanic—turner, fitter, etc.—in electrical, locomotive, motor-car, and other workshops."*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thick, heavy-built fellow, strong fellow, you know, like John L. Lewis or somebody. But he was a poet. And then I saw poets made out of whole cloth by Ezra. Ezra thought he did that. Take a fellow that had never written anything and think he could make a poet out of him. We won't go into that.

INTERVIEWER

I wonder about your reaction to such articles as the recent lead article by Karl Shapiro in the New York Times Book Review which praised you because presumably you're not guilty of "Modernism" as Pound and Eliot are.
(*Telephone rings*)

FROST

Is that my telephone? Just wait a second. Halt!
(*Interruption. Frost leaves for phone call.*)

FROST

Where were we? Oh yes, you were trying to trace me.

INTERVIEWER

I wasn't trying to trace you. I was—

FROST

Oh, this thing about Karl Shapiro. Yeah, isn't it funny? So often they ask me—I just been all around, you know, been out West, been all around—and so often they ask me, "What is a modern poet?" I dodge it often, but I said the other night, "A modern poet must be one that speaks to modern people no matter when he lived in the world. That would be one way of describing it. And it would make him more modern, perhaps, if he were *alive* and speaking to modern people."

INTERVIEWER

Yes, but in their way of speaking, Eliot and Pound seem to many people to be writing in a tradition that is very different from yours.

FROST

Yes. I suppose Eliot's isn't as far away as Pound's. Pound

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seemed to me very like a troubadour, more like the troubadours or a blend of several of them, Bertrand de Born and Arnault Daniel. I never touched that. I don't know old French. I don't like foreign languages that I haven't had. I don't read translations of things. I like to say dreadful, unpleasant things about Dante. Pound, though, he's supposed to know Old French.

INTERVIEWER

Pound was a good linguist, wasn't he?

FROST

I don't know that. There's a teacher of his down in Florida that taught him at the University of Pennsylvania. He once said to me, "Pound? I had him in Latin, and Pound never knew the difference between a declension and a conjugation." —He's death on him. Old man, still death on Ezra. (*Breaks into laughter*) Pound's gentle art of making enemies.

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever hear from Pound? Do you correspond with him now?

FROST

No.—He wrote me a couple of letters when I got him out of jail last year. Very funny little letters, but they were all right.

INTERVIEWER

Who did you speak to in Washington about that?

FROST

Just the Attorney General. Just settled it with him. I went down twice with Archie (Macleish) and we didn't get anything done because they were of opposite parties, I think. And I don't belong to any party.

INTERVIEWER

Yes, but weren't you named Robert Lee because your

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

father was a staunch Democrat around the time of the Civil War? That makes you a Democrat of sorts, doesn't it?

FROST

Yeah, I'm a Democrat. I was born a Democrat—and been unhappy ever since 1896. Somebody said to me, "What's the difference between that and being a Republican?" Well, I went down after we'd failed, and after Archie thought we'd failed, I just went down alone, walked into the Attorney General's Office and said, "I come down here to see what your mood is about Ezra Pound." And two of them spoke up at once. "Our mood's your mood; let's get him out." Just like that, that's all. And I said, "This week?" They said, "This week if you say so. You go get a lawyer, and we'll raise no objection." So, since they were Republicans, I went over and made friends with Thurman Arnold, that good leftish person, for my lawyer. I sat up that night and wrote an appeal to the court that I threw away, and, in the morning, just before I left town, I wrote another one, a shorter one. And that's all there was to it. Ezra thanked me in a very short note that read: "Thanks for what you're doing. A little conversation would be in order." Then signed, in large letters. And then he wrote me another one, a nicer one.

INTERVIEWER

Did you see him before he left for Italy?

FROST

No, no, I didn't want to high-hat him. I wanted him to feel kind of free from me. But he feels, evidently, a little gratitude of some kind. He's not very well, you know. Some of them didn't want... (*What Frost was about to say here, it turned out later in the interview, not recorded, was that some friends of Pound—he mentioned Merrill Moore—felt Pound would be better off staying in St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Moore said that Pound had a room to himself and a cabana!*) Well, it's a sad business. And he's a poet. I never, I never questioned that. We've been friends all the way along, but I didn't like what he did in wartime. I only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heard it second-hand, so I didn't judge it too closely. But it sounded pretty bad. He was very foolish in what he bet on and whenever anybody really loses that way, I don't want to rub it into him.

INTERVIEWER

I've been asking a lot of questions about the relationship of your poetry to other poetry, but of course there are many other non-literary things that have been equally important. You've been very much interested in science, for example.

FROST

Yes, you're influenced by the science of your time, aren't you? Somebody noticed that all through my book there's astronomy.

INTERVIEWER

Like *The Literate Farmer and the Planet Venus*?

FROST

Yes, but it's all through the book, all through the book. Many poems—I can name twenty that have astronomy in them. Somebody noticed that the other day: "Why has nobody ever seen how much you're interested in astronomy?" That's a bias, you could say. One of the earliest books I hovered over, hung around, was called *Our Place Among the Infinities*, by an astronomer in England named Proctor, noted astronomer. It's a noted old book. I mention that in one of the poems: I use that expression "our place among the infinities" from that book that I must have read as soon as I read any book, thirteen or fourteen, right in there I began to read. That along with *Scottish Chiefs*. I remember that year when I first began to read a book through. I had a little sister who read everything through, lots of books, everybody's books—very young, precocious. Me, I was—they turned me out of doors for my health.

INTERVIEWER

While we're thinking about science and literature, I wonder

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

if you have any reaction to the fact that Massachusetts Institute of Technology is beginning to offer a number of courses in literature?

FROST

I think they'd better tend to their higher mathematics and higher science. Pure science. They know I think that. I don't mean to criticize them too much. But you see it's like this: the greatest adventure of man is science, the Adventure of penetrating into matter, into the material universe. But the adventure is our property, a human property, and the best description of us is the humanities. Maybe the scientists wanted to remind their students that the humanities describe you who are adventuring into science, and science adds very little to that description of you, a little tiny bit. Maybe in psychology, or in something like that, but it's awful little. And so, the scientists to remind their students of all this give them half their time over there in the humanities now. And that seems a little unnecessary. They're worried about us and the pure sciences all the time. They'd better get as far as they can into their own subject. I was over there at the beginning of this and expressed my little doubts about it. I was there with Compton one night—he was sitting on the platform beside me. "We've been short," I turned to him before the audience, "we've been a little short in pure science, haven't we?" He said, "Perhaps—I'm afraid we may have been." I said, "I think that better be tended to." That's years ago.

INTERVIEWER

You just mentioned psychology. You once taught psychology, didn't you?

FROST

That was entirely a joke. I could teach psychology. I've been asked to join a firm of psychiatrists, you know, (by Merrill Moore) and that's more serious. But I went up there to disabuse the Teacher's College of the idea that there is any immediate connection between any psychology and their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

classroom work, disabuse them of the notion that they could mesmerize a class if they knew enough psychology. That's what they thought.

INTERVIEWER

Weren't you interested at one time in William James?

FROST

Yes, that was partly what drew me back to Harvard. But he was away all the time I was around here. I had Santayana, Royce, and all that philosophy crowd, Munsterberg. George Herbert Palmer, the old poetical one. I had 'em all. But I was there waiting for James, and I lost interest.

INTERVIEWER

Did Santayana interest you very much at that time?

FROST

No, not particularly. Well, yes. I always wondered what he really meant, where he was headed, what it all came to. Followed that for years. I never knew him personally. I never knew anybody personally in college. I was a kind of—went my own way. But I admired him. It was a golden utterance—he was something to listen to, just like his written style. But I wondered what he really meant. I found years afterward somewhere in his words that all was illusion, of two kinds, true and false. And I decided false illusion would be the truth: two negatives make an affirmative.

INTERVIEWER

While we're on things other than poetry that you were and are interested in, we might get onto politics for a moment. I remember one evening your mentioning that Henry Wallace became somehow associated with your poem, *Provide, Provide*.

FROST

People exaggerate such things. Henry Wallace was in Washington when I read the poem. Sat right down there in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the first row. And when I got to the end of it where it says "Better to go down dignified—With boughten friendship at your side—Than none at all. Provide, Provide!" I added, "Or somebody else will provide for ya." He smiled; his wife smiled. They were right down there where I could see them.

INTERVIEWER

Well, you don't have a reputation for being a New Dealer.

FROST

They think I'm no New Dealer. But really and truly I'm not, you know, all that clear on it. In *The Death of the Hired Man* that I wrote long, long ago, long before the New Deal, I put it two ways about home. One would be the manly way: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, They have to take you in." That's the man's feeling about it. And then the wife says, "I should have called it/Something you somehow hadn't to deserve." That's the New Deal, the feminine way of it, the mother way. You don't have to deserve your mother's love. You have to deserve your father's. He's more particular. One's a Republican, one's a Democrat. The father is always a Republican toward his son, and his mother's always a Democrat. Very few have noticed that second thing; they've always noticed the sarcasm, the hardness of the male one.

INTERVIEWER

That poem is often anthologized, and I wonder if you feel that the poems of yours that appear most often in the anthologies represent you very well.

FROST

I'm always pleased when somebody digs up a new one. I don't know... I leave that in the lap of the Gods, as they say.

INTERVIEWER

There are some I seldom see; for example, *A Servant to Servants* or *The Most of It* or *The Subverted Flower*. All of these I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

noticed the other day are omitted, for instance, from Untermeyer's anthology of your poems. Strange, isn't it?

FROST

Well, he was making his own choice. I never said a word to him, never urged him. I remember he said (Edward Arlington) Robinson only did once. Robinson told him, "If you want to please an old man you won't overlook my *Mr. Flood's Party*." That is a beautiful poem.

INTERVIEWER

Do you feel that any particular area of your work hasn't been anthologized?

FROST

I wouldn't know that. *The Subverted Flower*, for instance, nobody's ever touched. No—I guess it is; it's in Matty's (F. O. Matthiessen's) anthology. That's the one he made for the Oxford people.

INTERVIEWER

Yes, but its appearance is extremely rare in any selection of your work. It doesn't seem to fit some people's preconceptions about you. Another neglected poem, and an especially good one, is *Putting in the Seed*.

FROST

That's—. Sure. They leave that sort of thing out; they overlook that sort of thing with me. The only person ever noticed that was a hearty old friend of mine down at the University of Pennsylvania, Cornelius Weygandt*. He said, "I know what *that's* about."

INTERVIEWER

Do you ever read that poem in public?

* *Author of historical and descriptive studies of New Hampshire.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROST

No, I don't bother with those. No, there are certain ones. I wouldn't read *The Subverted Flower* to anybody outside. It isn't that I'm afraid of them, but I don't want them out. I'm shy about certain things in my books, they're more—. I'd rather they'd be read. A woman asked me, "What do you mean by that 'subverted flower?'" I said, "Frigidity in women." She left.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think that it was to correct the public assumption that your poetry is represented by the most anthologized pieces such as *Birches* that Lionel Trilling in his speech at your 85th birthday emphasized poems of a darker mood?

FROST

I don't know—I might run my eye over my book after Trilling, and wonder why he hadn't seen it sooner: that there's plenty to be dark about, you know. It's full of darkness.

INTERVIEWER

Do you suppose he imagined he was correcting some sort of public ingorance—some general mistake about your work?

FROST

He made the mistake himself. He was admitting he made it himself, wasn't he? He was telling what trouble he'd had to get at me. Sort of a confession, but very pleasant.

INTERVIEWER

That's true, but many admirers of yours did object to his emphasis on the "darkness" or "terror" in your poems.

FROST

Yes, well, he took me a little by surprise that night. He was standing right beside me and I had to get up right after him. Birthday party. And it took me—it didn't hurt me but I thought at first he was attacking me. Then when he began

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

comparing me to Sophocles and D. H. Lawrence I was completely at sea. What the two of them had to do with me, you know. Might be I might like it about Sophocles, but I'd be puzzled, oh, utterly at sea about D. H. Lawrence. It's all right though. I had to get up and recite soon after that, and so I was a little puzzled what to recite to illustrate what he was talking about. And right there—new to me: I hadn't read his paper. I'd never read him much. I don't read criticism. You see no magazines in the house.

INTERVIEWER

Did you feel better about his talk when you read his substantiation of it in *The Partisan Review*?

FROST

I read his defense of it. Very clever, very—very interesting. Admired him. He's a very—intellectual man. But I read very little, generally, in the magazines. Hadn't read that Shapiro thing you mentioned. That's news to me what he said. Is he a friend of mine?

INTERVIEWER

Oh, yes. He's a friend of yours, but he's like many friends of yours: he chooses to see in you something more simple than your best friends see. It's a bit like J. Donald Adams, also in the *Times*, angrily defending you against Trilling, only J. Donald Adams doesn't understand you very well either.

FROST

What was Shapiro saying?

INTERVIEWER

He was saying that most modern poetry is obscure and overdifficult, that this is particularly true of Pound and Eliot, but that it isn't true of you.

FROST

Well, I don't want to be difficult. I like to fool—oh, you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

know, you like to be mischievous. But not in that dull way of just being dogged and doggedly obscure.

INTERVIEWER

The difficulty of your poetry is perhaps in your emphasis on variety in tones of voice. You once said that consciously or unconsciously it was tones of voice that you counted on to double the meaning of every one of your statements.

FROST

Yes, you could do that. Could unsay everything I said, nearly. Talking contraries—it's in one of the poems. Talk by contraries with people you're very close to. They know what you're talking about. This whole thing of suggestiveness and *double entendre* and hinting—comes down to the word "hinting." With people you can trust you can talk in hints and suggestiveness. Families break up when people take hints you don't intend and miss hints you do intend. You can watch that going on, as a psychologist. I don't know. No, don't... no don't you... don't think of me... See, I haven't led a literary life. These fellows, they *really* work away with their prose trying to describe themselves and understand themselves, and so on. I don't do that. I don't want to know too much about myself. It interests me to know that Shapiro thinks I'm not difficult. That's all right. I never wrote a review in my life, never wrote articles. I'm constantly refusing to write articles. These fellows are all literary men. I don't have hours; I don't work at it, you know. I'm not a farmer, that's no pose of mine. But I have farmed some, and I putter around. And I walk and I live with other people. Like to talk a lot. But I haven't had a very literary life, and I'm never very much with the gang. I'm vice-president, no, I'm Honorary President of the Poetry Society of America. Once in a great while I go. And I wish them well. I wish the foundations would take them all, take care of them all.

INTERVIEWER

Speaking of foundations, why do you think Big Business,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so long the object of literary ridicule for being philistine, should now be supporting so much literary effort?

FROST

It's funny they haven't sooner, because most of them have been to college and had poetry pushed into them. About half the reading they do in all languages will be in verse. Just think of it. And so they have a kind of respect for it all and they probably don't mind the abuse they've had from our quarter. They're people who're worried that we just don't have enough imagination—it's the lack of imagination they're afraid of in our system. If we had enough imagination we could lick the Russians. I feel like saying, "Probably we won the Civil War with Emily Dickinson." We didn't even know she was there. Poor little thing.

INTERVIEWER

Would you agree that there are probably more good prizes for poetry today than there are good poets?

FROST

I don't know. I hate to judge that. It's nice for them—it's so nice for them to be interested in us, with their foundations. You don't know what'll come of it. You know the real thing is that the sense of sacrifice and risk is one of the greatest stimuli in the world. And you take that all out of it—take that away from it so that there's no risk in being a poet, I bet you'd lose a lot of the pious spirits. They're in it for the—hell of it. Just the same as these fellows breaking through the sound barrier up there, just the same. I was once asked in public, in front of four or five hundred women, just how I found leisure to write. I said, "Confidentially—since there's only five hundred of you here, and all women—like a sneak I stole some of it, like a man I seized some of it—and I had a little in my tin cup?" Sounds as if I'd been a beggar, but I've never been consciously a beggar. I've been at the mercy of... I've been a beneficiary around colleges and all. And this is one of the advantages to the American way: I've never had to write a word of thanks

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to anybody I had a cent from. The colleges came between. Poetry has always been a beggar. Scholars have also been beggars, but they delegate their begging to the president of the college to do for them.

INTERVIEWER

I was suggesting just now that perhaps the number of emoluments for poets greatly exceeds the number of people whose work deserves to be honored. Isn't this a situation in which mediocrity will necessarily be exalted? And won't this make it more rather than less difficult for people to recognize really good achievement when it does occur?

FROST

You know, I was once asked that, and I said I never knew how many disadvantages anyone needed to get anywhere in the world. And you don't know how to measure that. No psychology will ever tell you who needs a whip and who needs a spur to win races. I think the greatest thing about it with me has been this, and I wonder if others think it. I look at a poem as a performance. I look on the poet as a man of prowess, just like an athlete. He's a performer. And the things you can do in a poem are very various. You speak of figures, tones of voice varying all the time. I'm always interested, you know, when I have three or four stanzas, in the way I *lay* the sentences in them. I'd hate to have the sentences all lie the same in the stanzas. Every poem is like that: some sort of achievement in performance. Somebody has said that poetry among other things is the marrow of wit. That's probably way back somewhere—marrow of wit. There's got to be wit. And that's very, very much left out of a lot of this labored stuff. It doesn't sparkle at all. Another thing to say is that every thought, poetical or otherwise, every thought is a feat of association. They tell of old Gibbon—as he was dying he was the same Gibbon at his historical parallels. All thought is a feat of association: having what's in front of you bring up something in your mind that you almost didn't know you knew. Putting this and that together. That click.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INTERVIEWER

Can you give an example of how this feat of association—as you call it—works?

FROST

Well, one of my masques turns on one association like that. God says: "I was just showing off to the Devil, Job." Job looks puzzled about it, distressed a little. God says "Do you mind?" And, "No, no," he says, "No," in that tone, you know, "No," and so on. That tone is everything, the way you say that "no." I noticed that—that's what made me write that. Just that one thing made that.

INTERVIEWER

Did your other masque—*Masque of Mercy* have a similar impetus?

FROST

I noticed that the first time in the world's history when mercy is entirely the subject is in Jonah. It does say somewhere earlier in the Bible "If ten can be found in the city, will you spare it? Ten good people?" But in Jonah there is something worse than that. Jonah is told to go and prophesy against the city—and he *knows* God will let him down. He can't trust God to be unmerciful. You can trust God to be anything but unmerciful. So he ran away and—and got into a whale. That's the point of that and nobody notices it. They miss it.

INTERVIEWER

Why do you suppose, Mr. Frost, that among religious groups the masques had their best reception among Jesuits and Rabbis?

FROST

Amusing you say that—that's true. The other, the lesser sects without the law, you see, they don't get it. They're too apt to think there's rebellion in them—what they go through with their parents when they're growing up. But that isn't in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them at all, you know. They're not rebellious. They're very doctrinal, very orthodox, both of them. But how'd you notice that? It's amusing to me too. You see, the rabbis have been fine to me and so have the SJ's particularly, all over the country. I've just been in Kansas City staying with them. See, the masques are full of good orthodox doctrine. One of them turns on the thought that evil shows off to good and good shows off to evil. I made a couplet out of that for them in Kansas City, just the way I often do, off-hand: "It's from their having stood contrasted./That good and bad so long have lasted."

INTERVIEWER

Making couplets "off hand" is something like writing on schedule, isn't it? I know a young poet who claims he can write every morning from 6 to 9, presumably before class.

FROST

Well, there's more than one way to skin a cat. I don't know what that would be like, myself. When I get going on something, I don't want to just—you know... Very first one I wrote I was walking home from school and I began to make it— a March day—and I was making it all afternoon and making it so I was late at my grandmother's for dinner. I finished it, but it burned right up, just burned right up, you know. And what started that? what burned it? So many talk, I wonder how falsely, about what it costs them, what agony it is to write. I've often been quoted: "No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader." But another distinction I made is: however sad, no grievance, grief without grievance. How could I, how could anyone have a good time with what cost me too much agony, how could they? What do I want to communicate but what a *hell* of a good time I had writing it? The whole thing is performance and prowess and feats of association. Why don't critics talk about those things?—what a feat it was to turn that that way, and what a feat it was to remember that, to be reminded of that by this? Why don't they talk about that?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Scoring. You've got to *score*. They say not, but you've got to score—in all the realms,—theology, politics, astronomy, history, and the country life around you.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think of the performances of the poets who have made your birthplace, San Francisco, into their headquarters?

FROST

Have they? Somebody said I saw a lot of them in Kansas City at the end of my audience. They said, "See that blur over there? That's whiskers." No, I don't know much about that. I'm waiting for them to say something that I can get hold of. The worse the better. I like it anyway, you know. Like you say to somebody, "Say something. Say something." And he says, "I burn."

INTERVIEWER

Do young poets send you things?

FROST

Yes, some—not much, because I don't respond. I don't write letters and all that. But I get a little, and I meet them, talk with them. I get some books. I wonder what they're at. There's one book that sounded as if it might be good, "Aw, hell." The book was called "Aw, hell." Because "aw," the way you say "aw," you know, "Aw, hell!" That might be something.

INTERVIEWER

Most of the titles are funny. One is called *Howl* and another *Gasoline*.

FROST

Gasoline, eh? I've seen a little of it, kicking round. I saw a bunch of nine of them in a magazine in Chicago when I was through there. They were all San Franciscans. Nothing I could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

talk about afterwards, though, either way. I'm always glad of anybody that says anything awful. I can use it. We're all like that. You've got to learn to enjoy a lot of things you don't like. And I'm always ready for somebody to say some outrageous thing. I feel like saying, "Hold that now, long enough for me to go away and tell on you, won't you? Don't go back on it tomorrow." Funny world.

INTERVIEWER

When you look at a new poem that might be sent to you, what is it usually that makes you want to read it all or not want to read it?

FROST

This thing of performance and prowess and feats of association —that's where it all lies. One of my ways of looking at a poem right away it's sent to me, right off, is to see if it's rhymed. Then I know just when to look at it. The rhymes come in pairs, don't they? And nine times out of ten with an ordinary writer, one of two of the terms is better than the other. One makeshift will do, and then they get another that's good, and then another makeshift, and then another one that's good. That is in the realm of performance, that's the deadly test with me. I want to be unable to tell which of those he thought of first. If there's any trick about it, putting the better one first so as to deceive me, I can tell pretty soon. That's all in the performance realm. They can belong to any school of thought they want to, Spinoza or Schopenhauer, it doesn't matter to me. A Cartesian I heard Poe called, a Cartesian philosopher, the other day...tsssssss

INTERVIEWER

You once saw a manuscript of Dylan Thomas's where he'd put all the rhymes down first and then backed into them. That's clearly not what you mean by performance, is it?

FROST

See, that's very dreadful. It ought to be that you're thinking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forward, with the feeling of strength that you're getting them good all the way, carrying out some intention more felt than thought. It begins. And what it is that guides us—what is it? Young people wonder about that, don't they? But I tell them it's just the same as when you feel a joke coming. You see somebody coming down the street that you're accustomed to abuse, and you feel it rising in you, something to say as you pass each other. Coming over him the same way. And where do these thoughts come from? Where does a thought? Something does it to you. It's him coming toward you that gives you the animus, you know. When they want to know about inspiration, I tell them it's mostly animus.

—Richard Poirier

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SECOND CANTO

There was a bed prepared and avoided
Smoke faces
Too great a distraction
In space

Others lay heavy
Where I was not
A sigh where a face had been
So then was space droning
With scissors of legs
And prelude of breath

Alliance matured
Gone into disrepute
And she desirous

I change the tune of her

Two pits in cheeks
Of her smiles
And feet forcing
The ultimate world
Of her sheets
These holding her
For me virginal
In frame represented
A profile
Against her walking

Night
And the bed I avoided
Confusion
Of faces I repeat
Forerunners
Less worthy
And she
In need of an agony

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I change the tune of her

A density of feet ranging and the earth a tabor
Moist night falls from the sky Troy wakens in me
Queen do I need to make a beginning? Say only
There was a woman as you are now
Where she touched there are ashes where she loved
Bones crunched into filigree Hector and Priam
This disconnection of stones her doing
Who will say surely caprice or intention
In her mind rotted the mortar but all in private
Agreed her voyage a search for an agony
Such as comes in movement of feet a tiptoed
Boldness and the face holding what is
Not there if the moment were split into motives

A bed prepared I avoided it
Were you a fool at her court
And rumored the flight of her night-times?
Had you fashioned a flower of mythologies
An abstract of all faces
So that attempting all cities
One compass-leg slipped and really
You had not moved? Always in night
The one place? Had you?

I change the tune of her

Now my bridge moves
I have thrown one point to another
And strengthen the fastening

Consider which men
In the myths have triumphed
I see remorse in all heroes
A grief of Odysseus
Three times attempting

To hold his dead mother
(She stood as in life)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Three times his hands
Caught the air
This is the manner
Of men
Gone from under the sky

(Later Penelope
Wondered that he passed
His hands three times over her face
Before touching her eyes)

A remorse untouched
By return there is none
A journey of ready death

My bridge moves
The boards hunger
And groan as I twine them
Trees have been cut
To one length
Thoughts fitted
Hollowed the mould of ambition
The tooth of the wheel
The business on other shores
My banks
Myself the explorer

A bed prepared
A motive in history
Many such in the rubble
Of Pergamon or Helen
Has crazed the world with a promise
I avoided it

Leave this road

I change the tune of her

Now like livers stumbling because of their locked fingers
And their gaze

—ARTHUR BOYARS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ELIZABETH SAVAGE

Victoria

So much is true: the last thing in the world the Baldridges desired that summer day was any contact with the Bevis girl.

When they started down across the rocks, Mrs. Baldridge went first. She carried the blanket and the woolen cape from Innsbruck, in case of wind. Earl brought the towels, the fly-repellent, and the binoculars—they were expensive, and he surefooted. Mrs. Baldridge herself, however, took some pride in her ability to cross the tumbled crags rapidly, if not recklessly, one lean foot placed before the other in a steady, skillful progress that required a constant shifting of eye from the rock beneath one's foot (the flat black, the rough-grained, the treacherously balanced) to those ahead. It was thus impossible to see until she reached the first pocket of beach whether the better stretch of sand beyond was occupied or not.

Only if it was vacant, utterly, shining empty and wet under a shimmer of gulls, would they set foot upon it.

They objected to all the Bevis's, but most of all to Victoria; they didn't agree that she had grown attractive during the past winter. A strange, sand-colored child—except for those rather startling sapphire eyes—she was perhaps leggier, certainly no more gracious. And she retained her old, uneasy ubiquity. Berrying on a crisp morning the Baldridges would meet her gaze, oddly cold for a child barely in her teens, through a filigree of brambles. Bird-watching, their glasses caught her as surely as a magnet catches filings, and once, a motionless figure brooding on a rock, she had cast an inimical, long look in their direction that had left Earl quite flustered.

Drawing by J. F. Ulysse

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One could not, in all fairness, accuse her of discourtesy. But everywhere, everywhere, she violated their privacy.

And the Baldridges had come to Cap'n Wyatt Point for privacy, and mark you, had come *first*. There had been no one on the Point when they discovered it, the Cap'n himself having already been taken away by some one from the State, and the title to his land gone to his daughter in Augusta.

Then, too, everything south of Portland had proved prohibitive, and all too likely to be banded by shacky cottages and sheds where you could watch baby seals and buy clams or carved wooden gulls. They had been quite discouraged until they stumbled on the Point, which was hard to find in the first place and once found, next to impossible to traverse because of the road that struggled through matted pine and cedar and was, where it threaded the salt marshes, awash as often as it rained.

Yet that same road, as Earl predicted the first day, had long discouraged many an unwanted neighbor.

Mrs. Baldridge stopped now, firmly, in such a fashion that it could not possibly be interpreted as a loss of balance. It had been a cool summer, and brief—already, in early August, she had seen a sandpiper on the beach. Mrs. Baldridge did not like sandpipers. Terns, yes, and cormorants, yes—sandpipers, no. She did not like the stilt-legged gaiety with which the small birds scuttled back and forth with the sliding foam, almost as if they rejoiced that they presaged the beginning of fall and the end of everything.

Now she pivoted, searching the pale sky for those thin clouds that could skim so quickly until they masked the sun and then hung motionless and sullen, while beneath it was suddenly cold. Seeing none, she turned to wave encouragingly to Earl. He was not twenty feet behind her, but she would not call, since the crashing water would cover all but the most unseemly shriek.

Then she went on.

For a handful of bright years they had possessed the woods, the miles of foaming shore, the little meadow marshes where

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the highbush blueberries grew—and with it all, a legend, too. For it was bruited about the town that Cap'n Wyatt, a man irascible as he was eccentric, had cursed the land upon leaving it—a pretty story, one Mrs. Baldridge was fond of relating to her winter friends. You see, the Cap'n had believed in sprites.

"He didn't!" her friends would cry, titillated.

Yes, he did! He himself had always placated them with small gifts: a fish from every catch, a fistful of wild berries scattered from each pint he gathered, one of his few pension dollars (they claimed) consigned each month to the outgoing tide. In return, he commanded his familiars to visit with disaster anyone with the temerity to own the land that had so long been his.

No, it had not alarmed the Baldridges. Vindictive though the old gentleman had certainly been, they had a certain sympathy with his point of view. Certainly it had been delightful for three glorious summers to share the Point with no one; to see, except when they went to the Store, no one at all.

Eventually, of course, a trickle of summer settlers did begin—for the most part, the Baldridges had not minded them so much as you might think. It was not the sort of place to attract lively people. The newcomers were quiet, put up modest camps decently masked from one another by ledge and pine, and they had—until the Bevis's came—seemed happy to accept the Baldridge conventions: no errands, no borrowing, above all, no congress on the beach.

Mrs. Baldridge had grown quite fond of some of them. It was rather fun to tell them scary things: of the sucking potholes in the basin where the clamming was the very best, of the fires that could leap through underbrush and slash to trap them all between the timber and the tide, and of course, of the Cap'n's Curse.

That was of course before the Bevis's.

It was a great pity, Mrs. Baldridge felt, that the Harringtons had not been able to keep their little house. They had been charming people with two lovely, pale, intimidated little

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

girls. And though like the Baldridges they were academic, and therefore on the Point all summer long, they were younger, observed a nice protocol, and kept their distance.

Elsie Harrington, however, had found the Point too much for her. She was too high-strung for it; she saw potential dangers where even Mrs. Baldridge had not, alert though she was. Elsie Harrington was afraid of animals in the woods. She was afraid of tidal waves. She might be seen a dozen times a week, white-faced (but silent) searching among the rocks for the two little girls, who goodness knows were never very far. She was afraid of storms—the world knows lightning follows water. And after the first hurricane she was frank to say the Point was not for her.

Mr. Harrington had hoped at first to hang on to the property. But even with taxes ridiculously low, it had not proved easy. And since there was a rigid, though unwritten, agreement among them all not to Rent—but you do understand, not to *anyone*—he had at last, apologetically and regretfully, Sold.

The first little sandy beach, the one that was their very own property (to the high-tide line) was in some ways unsatisfactory. For one thing, the very wall of rock that kept the sea from sucking out the sand shut out the whole panorama of the water. Also, if the tide were coming in—as it was now—the water had a way of flowing around both edges of the barrier in a crafty, purposeful way that made it hard to relax, knowing as one did that sooner or later the two channels would meet, and that after that it was only a matter of minutes until the cold wavelets possessed one's feet.

However, if the Bevis's were on the beach beyond, it was best to stop here.

And they were. Mrs. Baldridge had no more than felt the first smooth, silky sand beneath her feet when she was also aware of agitated figures running in disorderly patterns that had the look of panic, but that was, as she knew from experience, only play. Today there was a bear-like shape among them, larger than any of them, and none of them was small. She could not identify him, but he shuffled among

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them as fast as the rest, but hairier. Mrs. Baldridge turned her eyes away.

Resignedly she spread the blanket, a signal of defeat that Earl, laboring down toward her, would understand only too well. She sank upon it, lowering herself from the sight of the Bevis's, and also from every glimpse of the water, the gulls, the woods beyond. At least, she had also lowered herself out of the wind. For it was not warm, not comfortably warm, this morning. The sky was brightly, falsely blue, landward a puff of cloud moved with suspicious agility. Mrs. Baldridge hoped she was not going to need the cape.

She sighed, she pushed her long toes luxuriously into the damp sand. It was simply not true that they had been unfriendly to the Bevis's. Any complaints the Baldridges had lodged with the selectmen, the fire warden, or the fish-and-game, were no more numerous than they would have been in the case of any neighbor so careless with campfires, guns, and cans.

It *was* true that they had had to take a certain stand, particularly insofar as it concerned dropping-in. The Baldridges did treasure being undisturbed. And with all the others a hint had been enough—gracefully given, graciously received. The Bevis's were the first whose boisterous, persistent friendliness had required the snub direct.

That first summer Mrs. Bevis had been the great offender. Sand-colored like her daughter but with faded eyes, she was forever coming by with their mail, or to see if anything was wanted from the Store, or to ask if the boys could use the clam-hoe. The second time, it came back rusted; after that Earl claimed firmly that he meant to use it himself. But the Bevis's were not easily discouraged. They had a mania for sharing. One was never free of their small gifts—pollock limp and bloody in newspaper, brown bags of wild strawberries wet with pink juice, green apples that drew fruit flies—and all demanding small talk and gratitude.

Never before that had they to keep a nervous watch upon the belt of boulders. It was bad enough to see the mother scrambling inexorably in their direction, but not to see her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and be startled over their coffee, or perhaps from their naps, was worse. The unexpected knock at the screen door, the cheerful halloo in the sunny silence shattered them like so many small explosions.

"This," Mrs. Baldridge had said at last, "will never do." The next time she had been prepared. "Here she comes," she had said. "She's got the girl with her. Just stay in the kitchen, Earl."

She herself had watched from just behind the curtain, so that even as Mrs. Bevis's chubby fist was raised to knock Mrs. Baldridge was out in a flash, one finger lifted playfully to her lips, her eyes purposefully severe above them.

"*Please!*" she had said.

Then, rather than asking them into the porch, she slipped through the screen door to confront them on the steps.

"Yes?" she asked.

Victoria—ten, she must have been that summer—collapsed on a log in the piney sunshine and raked mosquito bites. Her vivid, placid eyes were fixed on Mrs. Baldridge with unswerving interest. The mother leaned a sun-burned elbow on a blue-jeaned knee. Her brown toes, Mrs. Baldridge noted, were splayed from going barefoot. She beamed beneath a nest of khaki-colored curls.

They bore an invitation to—of all things—a wiener roast on the beach.

Mrs. Baldridge made no bones about it. Curiously uncomfortable under the child's unchanging gaze, she had said flatly, "Oh dear me, no!"

After a moment for emphasis she had continued, perfectly kindly, mind you, "I see I'm going to have to be quite frank..."

Oddly enough, it was the child who flushed.

Mrs. Baldridge had watched their retreat across the rocks. When they reached the sand the little girl put out her hand to take her mother's and linked like that, they had dwindled down the beach.

"There!" Mrs. Baldridge had said to Earl.

Nevertheless, they had had their wiener roast; it flourished

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all one afternoon, and the Baldridges had been a little surprised to see how many people had accepted.

The Point was never the same again.

In the first place, there were too many of them for that little house. It was a large family and they were all remarkably alike, so that it was difficult to tell, unless you knew them better than the Baldridges intended to, just how many there were or indeed, which were Bevis's at all, since they entertained an incessant series of cousins and friends, all equally large of shoulder and loud of voice. Mrs. Baldridge knew well how many that camp would house with any dignity. She was not surprised to find them overflowing in untidy tents, in sleeping-bags; even, one summer, in a battered trailer.

At first there had been a great deal of talk about enlarging. Mr. Oliver at the Store had been full of relayed information about the plans, the extra bedrooms, the second shower. Well, they had yet to see it.

They were pretty sure there were at least three boys besides the little girl, although at any distance it was impossible to tell Victoria from the boys—at least until the last two years, when it had become all too obvious, especially since she had embarked upon a species of gymnastics, and in a series of inadequate garments performed upon the beach such extraordinary feats that one had to look away.

Never had they seen such an active family. It was a rare and rainy day when they were not upon the sand with balls, with guitars, with inner tubes. By day and by night the air was sullied with the fires of their interminable picnics; their singing shattered each sequined evening.

Even to think of it, Mrs. Baldridge twitched with impatience, and Earl, who had just lumbered to her side, asked if the flies were bad.

No more than usual, she said tartly, and turned upon her face. Beside her Earl settled heavily. He kept his sweater on, which annoyed her, since there was no point at all in lying in the sun if one was covered. She sometimes thought Earl lacked her stamina.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Persistent as the black-flies, the thought of the Bevis's returned.

The father had a gentle, surprised face and something to do with hardware, she believed; at any rate, he was only there on week-ends. The mother, agile for her years, could skim along the shore with the best of them. Whatever the children did, the parents shared—their heads bobbed in the surf, they took their turn at bat in the cacaphonous games that made the shining beach so dangerous.

Mrs. Baldridge was almost sure that they were respectable. There were no quarrels, no plunging drunken figures on the beach, no telltale bottles washed back among the rocks. She had never heard—and one did hear—of adult friends in the absence of either spouse.

Nevertheless. All the older ones drove now, the yard was littered with their desperate machines. The ride out to the Store which had always been such a pleasure—many a blue heron they had surprised in the marsh—had become torment. Earl, who loathed being startled, was rigid at every turn, for the Bevis boys spent a good deal of their time simply coming and going, and always with the exasperating girl perched silent and big-eyed beside them. One was almost sure to meet at least one of them bumper to bumper, with a screaming of brakes that left Earl's nerves humming like wires. At one point they had been quite sure that one of those boys was too young to drive at all. Earl had spoken to the State Police when they were next in town, and sure enough, some small unpleasantness did indeed ensue.

As a matter of fact, it seemed to Mrs. Baldridge that it was directly after that that they began to encounter Victoria everywhere they went—a slim shape glimpsed between pines, behind the juniper bushes, reflected momentarily in the pellucid depths of the tidal pools, almost, she had once thought uneasily, as if while they stalked birds, *she* stalked *them*—a thought so preposterous that Mrs. Baldridge had never communicated it to Earl, who at the best was a nervous man, with little patience for what he called her "notions." Still...

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Recently, however, they had felt a little hope. Not only had there been no new building, but even the damage done the roof in the big storm of last fall was not repaired. A tree still lay, splintered and gray, across the Bevis's front steps: they had simply begun to use the other entrance.

Nor was this all. Mrs. Baldridge had heard from Lonzo Snow who was the Water Company that the Bevis's last summer's bill was not caught up. After sincere consideration, she passed this on to Mr. Oliver at the Store, who had ever been too trusting for his own good. She had been gratified to learn, a little later, that he was being careful. That is, he charged things for the Bevis's, but did not cash their checks.

Now Mrs. Baldridge anointed Earl with the repellent, and he, her. She gave a measured sigh, thankful for their small sandy sanctuary and for the sun, which at least during this ten minutes was hot upon her weathered shoulders. One could not say she sprawled—she did lie relaxed.

Then the light, melancholy voice said, "Hi!"

Mrs. Baldridge struggled to reverse her position, tugging at the skirt of her navy suit and aware of the blue-mottled areas beneath it.

Victoria, of course.

She had climbed the wall of rock and leaned against it now in a pair of her brother's shorts and a bra-top that belonged, surely, to her mother. Chill as it was, she had been in the water, her short hair was plastered to her skull, and her long sandy lashes starred with salt.

"Oh!" Mrs. Baldridge laughed testily. "You startled me, dear!"

"Sorry," Victoria said. She lifted her arms above her head with a glistening movement that was really rather graceful. "I was just going through," she said.

The girl was the color of almonds except where the brother's shorts, slipping on her flat little middle, displayed a streak of ivory. The Baldridges sat stiffly smiling.

"Do you believe at all," Victoria asked abruptly, "in that old story about the Capn's Curse?"

"Ah," Mrs. Baldridge answered absently, "Qui sait?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well," the child said, "that's where I'm going. To the Cap'n's camp." Balanced upon her tough young feet she sank upon her heels and rose again liquidly.

Earl snorted and eased down upon his back. Mrs. Baldridge remained erect until the girl was gone. Then she reclined.

And for some minutes it was glorious. The breeze subsided, the sun spilled hot and golden over the small beach. Earl loosened the buttons of his sweater. Beyond the wall of rock the great waves advanced and died sedately. For a few minutes only. Then the first great shout assaulted the sunny silence and left them gasping with distress.

Mrs. Baldridge was on her knees at once. It was a sound so menacing, so inappropriate. And it was followed immediately by a variety of yelps, of cries of protest, a clamor as shrill as the squealing of the gulls. An incredible splash drowned for a moment even the breaking water, hung in the blue air and was lost in turn beneath the second mighty bellow.

With one accord the Baldridges scuttled across the sand to the rock barrier and peered above it. Anybody would. There where the jumbled granite formed a cliff above the tide the Bevis's had gathered, welded together by some uncharacteristic alarm. They gazed down and out to where the water broke like soap scum against the reaching ledges. The sea ran high; on it a huge log bobbed and balanced, and even as the Baldridges watched entranced, a tremendous burly shape struggled beside the log, spun it, and was somehow astride, roaring triumphantly. Several Bevis's raised cupped hands to their mouths. The Baldridges could not hear what they called, but they heard clearly the coarse answer of the man who rode the log.

"Hell with it!" he boomed.

"I don't believe," Mrs. Baldridge murmered nervously, "it's at all safe."

Indeed, it was not safe, for handsome as it was, this stretch of the coast had a bad name for rip tides, rapid currents, undertows, and while it was true that one could *dip* here at low tide and with a little care, the sea had for so long savaged the granite coast that there were everywhere hidden ribs of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ragged rock against which the combers might hurl and break even the lustiest swimmer.

"He must be drunk," Earl pronounced grimly.

"Surely not!" Mrs. Baldridge cried.

A gross bear of a man, heavily hairy to where his red trunks vanished beneath the droop of his wet belly, the stranger swayed with his log, swung in the current, and began a rapid drift in their direction. The Baldridges sank until their eyes only were level with the rock; they watched while the log bucked like an unruly beast.

"Ride 'em!" the stranger roared.

Agitated, the Bevis's broke and reclustered. And the log missed the bubbling water over the last hidden ledge and floated into safer depths. He would not, then, drown. Relieved and disappointed, the Baldridge's retreated to their blanket.

But the morning was ruined. Now they were oddly trapped, since the man drifted not twenty feet from their own rocks, close enough so that if they rose, they might well meet his gaze. Not even the small green crab that washed suddenly into the deepening pool beside them comforted Mrs. Baldridge.

Out of old habit she said, "Earl, a little crab!"

But he lay unresponsive, frozen in protest and listening.

For out beyond the rocks the terrible stranger had begun to sing. Bawdy and raucous that bull-voice rose over the decorous water. Mrs. Baldridge sank nervously beside her husband; the words were blessedly lost in a mingling of surf and curses.

Sand had shifted over their blanket, and Mrs. Baldridge brushed at it frantically. It clung to the fly-repellent, coating her legs like grainy stockings. Earl rolled on the binoculars and muttered savagely as the hard case bruised his ribs.

"I think," Mrs. Baldridge said, "we may as well give up."

Earl glared at her. "I'll be damned," he said. "I'll be *damned!*"

Oh, she was proud of him. He was right! Firmly she settled on the sand again. But the sun vanished abruptly behind a fringe of cloud, and Mrs. Baldridge, looking up, saw that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cloud was thick in the center and would take minutes to pass. The skin on her arms puckered and turned blue. And the terrible chanting voice was suddenly much closer, the splashing, the grunting ominously near.

"Earl," Mrs. Baldridge said after an incredulous moment. "I do believe he's going to come ashore!"

"Certainly not!" Earl said indignantly. But even as he spoke the man arose upon their personal rocks, lumbering seal-like, wet, blowing; black with hair.

The Baldridges sat bolt upright.

The intruder rose heavily from massive knees to balance precariously on the weedy rocks. He lifted a thick finger and pointed it at them. He grinned. It was all too easy to see that his motives were of the friendliest.

"I," he confided in that rumbling voice, "shall go down to the great sweet mother!" The shorts sagged ominously. Mrs. Baldridge gasped.

The stranger tottered, recovered, beamed upon them. "Mother and lover of men," he explained. "The sea!"

Slowly, with great dignity, the Baldridges began to collect their things. They looked above the invader, they looked beyond him. A certain inappropriate hurt crept now into that monstrous voice.

"Swinburne," he complained. "You don't like *Swinburne?*"

Violated, the Baldridges arose and turned their backs. Mrs. Baldridge took the blanket, Earl the towels and binoculars. Mrs. Baldridge drew the Innsbruck cape about her naked shoulders; as noble as a Roman matron she turned and cast upon the Goth one crushing look. The Bevis's had gone too far this time.

"Well, hoity-toity!" he roared. "Lah-di-dah!"

It is not easy to retreat, encumbered and clambering, with the precise majesty which one would wish. And Mrs. Baldridge was not pleased in glancing up to see that where the timber began Victoria stood watching them. Earl nodded curtly and would have passed, but Mrs. Baldridge, vibrating with outrage, pinched his arm meaningfully and paused. It was, she felt, only to have been expected from the beginning

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—the grossness, the vulgarity, the noise. But there could be protests, there could be petitions. It should not be.

"A nice walk, dear?" she asked in a voice that trembled with indignation.

The girl's hair had dried to a startling taffy color. She held a round cork with a hole in it, thrown up upon the beach from some fishing net. It was just the useless sort of thing the Bevis's liked to find.

"Thank you," she said, "Yes, it was very pleasant."

"It has not," Mrs. Baldridge challenged, "been quite so pleasant here." Her laugh was tinny. "We've had a most *unusual* experience."

Victoria's extraordinary eyes brightened with interest.

Mrs. Baldridge cast the gauntlet. "There has been," she said, "a...a *person* on the beach..."

"Aah," Victoria breathed. "Mr. Higgey!"

"Perhaps," Mrs. Baldridge said icily. "A friend of your father's, dear?"

"Not exactly," Victoria answered. "A dreadful man," she added dreamily, "a truly dreadful man."

Mrs. Baldridge felt a little disappointed to have her very words thus snatched from her. Her ire was great; so was her curiosity.

Victoria's glance was mild, her tone portentous. "Mr. Higgey has lots of money," she said, "and dotes upon the sea. A fascinating person in some ways, but quite corrupt."

Mrs. Baldridge said that was certainly her impression.

"He drinks," Victoria confided.

"One can see that," Earl said.

With her free hand the girl grasped one bronze ankle and swayed for an instant at a painful angle. "Also," she said, "he is a bottom-pincher. However," she added from behind a curtain of taffy hair, "it's possible that there's some good in him, for we gather he has many, many friends. Mobs, you might say. Of course, they perhaps all carouse together."

It was impossible to converse until the child had righted herself. Then Earl said, "I hope he is not going to be a frequent visitor?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Victoria's eyes flashed with something very like amusement. "Well, not a *visitor*," she said.

She turned the piece of cork then in her hands, and with a specious gesture of sympathy thrust it upon Mrs. Baldridge. "Do take this," she said gently. "They make such interesting candlesticks. And we won't use it, now we've sold the camp."

The Baldridges sat on their granite ledge, motionless as a monument to some antique defeat. She in her cape with the silly bit of cork, and he with binoculars and towels watched, while Victoria drifted effortless as spray down the mean belt of broken rocks. Upon the beach she paused, and then, not at all unlike a sprite herself, with the green lace of the water at her feet she danced along the margin of the narrowing shore.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON

Poems From

"HERMAN MOON'S HOURBOOK"

I

ABASIS

Walking docile as you do down the empty street
The shadow-crowded granite, glow of sodium seas
It may shake the pavement under your feet
May drum with fists on air beside you
Mirage at your back may corrupt the clarity before you
May knock on your door when guests have turned and gone
May trouble your dream in the house (angel or monster
Figures recoil then into the cavity of the dream)
Dissolving bastions you had made sure were solid
Dispensing the life that is casual (not good but average)
May issue a spectre out of the throat of morning
Mask of sweat at noon
Forbidding the ecstasy that rides the noon's brow
Perplexing the cool that lays the dust at evening
Hollowing the tranced hill where you squat at sundown
Happy with friends to watch the turning of the stars

II

All the long forenoon, the loitering of insects;
Their invisible wings, whirring in choir and alley,
By lemon pyramids, in domes of organpounded air,
Over golden loaves that cool on glass in Greek Street.

One has flown to the vine slopes of a gated city,
One is crushed in a tube; one is a foreign king,
Stern in his carriage, popular, waving;
One with a whip stumbled after office girls,
And woke smiling. In iron shade
To one on a bench his nostril's curlew pipings bring
Concomitant visions of vacant moors.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One has dwelled among the springs and heard
A throbbing in the ark above their mountain.
One sidesteps a banker with a beak
And a dead baby dangling on a string from it.
One wisecracks. One darts giggling under a hat,
To munch a matchstick. One reads words
ARBOGAST FACTION PACT BUT HEAT RISES

One: severed from the great root the strong shrivel
One: the voluminous black fire answers their cry of terror
One: the plumed waves have burst long enough on this shore
One: scattering the blind swarms that drink at the carcass.

III

THE SNIFF

Beak nose, bug eyes, almost bald head,
Drumskin over cheekbones, drawn in slack,
Wry over jawbones, flesh sucked into a mouth
Where pursed lips poise, to spit out evil taste,
He sniffs, with skidding jaw, and nose pinched,
Gills rise, then fall, and then he sniffs again,
Coughs up such snot as dropped back in his throat
Till nostrils gaze again, eyesockets empty, and disclose
Darkness within, where of small hairs undergrowths glisten
Tricked with the stinted light this economic café gives.
He sniffs regularly, ravenously, glaring about himself;
Not picking, not blowing, he sits and sniffs; perhaps
To dislodge some crumb derelict after a choked meal?
To dull memories of cooking he loved as a little child?
To shake off desire, roused in a fragrance wafted over
So that swallowed lust mysteriously glides into a dewdrop?

A too hard sniff culminates in a sly gurk.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IV

AN ODE, ON CONTEMPLATING CLAPHAM JUNCTION

All day rain fell. Morning:
One dusky liquid nymphless cave.

By noon the cave was crammed with ocean.
Two trains, full tilt, great whistling mackerel,
Raced in an X under whaleshaped shadow.

Umbrellas, propped in halls, by tea,
Behaved across the floor, like puppies.

All fall, by day, had rained. As late
As nine now moist sun
Ushers a fearful agitation in

Through curtain after lifting curtain.
Some thrush or other aches to sing.

Joy. One thrush. One overhasty … No.
The sun mistaken, rising upside down?
Washed clean, no, space begins, unfolding

A million brilliant swishing fans
Of bluish nothing.

Draughts of tomorrow
Drawn slow
Into empty lungs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

V

TENEBRAE

Enter my discourse as you dared and stood
Between your doorway and the dark and easily
The halflight curled into the hood of your hair.

Then you might have been
Other than what is ordinarily shown.

Shaking the timbers of the compatible world
Wisdom along her veins and her eyes withdrawn
One instant from her dream on that obedient stair,
Night seas unfurled through glory, into her form.

Now among flaring things, now moving in the mist,
Their element in distress, might they not
Might they not have drowned in error for tenderness?

No fragrance fell, no motion troubled the air.
Back and gone in thickets of unbreakable glass,
Large-eyed, upright, indubitably gone she has.

This might have happened long, very long ago.

VI

WATERLOO BRIDGE

The rolled umbrella on my wrist,
How much air, crushed in the folds,
Aches for expulsion? What is starved
Between my hat's crown and my own
Of angering freshness, deep deep down?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chimney and sailor, ship and star
Strangely belong. The cobbled lanes
Rib the long river. Wet flint mounds
Tug at its roots; and cranes that inch
Athwart thick rooves, suppose this freedom.

Horns blast the ear, like anchors flung
By fluke through sludge to block
Derision riding seaward with the sun.
A meal of rats, doled out by love,—
Crushed by the silence, bolt it down.

VII

POINTED BOOTS

At three in the morning
A quietness descends on central railway stations.

A mail van, or an ambulance, may be there;
A man in pointed boots, a Miss Carew.

Quietness keeps them apart,
The quietness that descends on central railway stations.

It is not meant for me.
It is not meant for you.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWS FROM NORWOOD

Professor Palamedes darts down Westow Street.
Nothing explains how he avoids
Colliding with mutton, plastics, pianos.
Professor Palamedes, darting down Westow Street,
Tunnels through petrol fumes and tundra;
Rhomboid oysterbeds under his rubbers,
Sparrows and sandwiches scatter before him.

Where is he going, Professor Palamedes?
It's well past three. What has he forgotten?
What can he have forgotten, Professor Palamedes,
Who stood with Agur by Solomon's elbow,
Who flogged the sea, full of nymphs and sheep,
Whom meat moods or helpful harmonies do not perplex?

Let us say he is going toward the stranger.
Again: he is going toward the stranger.
No matter who. The stranger. Who showed his face.
Who showed his face over Solomon's shoulder;
Who saw at Salamis, as planks buckled and the nymphs
Cheered, how sheep just went on cropping grass,
Side by side, to a tinkling of bells.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDWARD LEAR IN FEBRUARY

Since last September I've been trying to describe
Two moonstone hills,
And an ochre mountain, by candlelight, behind.
But a lizard has been sick into the ink,
A cat keeps clawing at me, you should see my face,
I'm too intent to dodge.

Out of the corner of my eye,
An old man (he's putting almonds into a bag)
Stoops in sunlight, closer than the hills.
But all the time these bats flick at me
And plop, like foetuses, all over the blotting paper.
Someone began playing a gong outside, once.
I liked that, it helped; but in a flash
Neighbours were pelting him with their slippers and things,
Bits of coke and old railway timetables.

I have come unstuck in this cellar. Help.
Pacing up and down in my own shadow
Has stopped me liking the weight it falls from.
That lizard looks like being sick again. The owls
Have built a stinking nest on the Eighteenth Century.

So much for two moonstone hills,
Ochre mountain, old man
Cramming all those almonds into a bag.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Gina Berriault *(The Bystander)* has published in *Mademoiselle* and *Harper's Bazaar*. She was the winner of the first Aga Khan prize for fiction in 1956 and has since been included in the O. Henry memorial volume of best short stories of the year. Her novel, *Secretary For Humanity*, will be published by Atheneum.

Elizabeth Savage *(Victoria)* is a graduate of Colby College and lives in isolation on the Maine seacoast with her writer-husband, Thomas Savage. Her first novel, *Summer of Pride*, is appearing this January.

Jan Gerhard Toonder *(The Time We Will)* who first appeared in English in THE PARIS REVIEW No. 23, is a Dutchman and the author of nine novels in his native language. He is responsible for his own translation with the assistance of John Anthony West.

Thomas Whitbread *(The Rememberer)* is an Instructor of English at the University of Texas. A graduate of Amherst College and the Harvard Graduate School, he has published poems in *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and other magazines. This is his first published story, the winner of the Aga Khan prize for fiction.

INTERVIEWS

Olga Carlisle *(Interview with Boris Pasternak)* is the granddaughter of Leonid Andreyev, the Russian playwright and short story writer. She is American and is married to Henry Carlisle, a New York publisher.

Richard Poirier *(Interview with Robert Frost)* is an assistant professor of English at Harvard University, author of the recently-published *The Comic Sense of Henry James*, and the editor of the O. Henry Prize Stories.

POETRY

Arthur Boyars *(Second Canto)* is a young English poet, and a former editor of *Mandrake*. His poems and reviews have appeared in a variety of English journals.

Lee Gerlach *(Earth and Air)* has studied at Stanford and the University of Michigan, and is now teaching in San Diego.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thom Gunn *(With Good Humor)* one of the foremost of young English poets, has lived for the last six years in the United States. His most recent collection of poems, *The Sense of Movement*, was published by Faber in England and by the University of Chicago Press in America.

X. J. Kennedy *(Faces from a Bestiary)* won a Hopwood award at the University of Michigan in 1959. Doubleday will publish his first book of poems in 1961.

Peter Levi S.J. *("Ship-building emperors commanded"* and *"If ghosts existed there are some men")* teaches at a Catholic boarding school in Lancashire. His *L'Aurore Grelottante* was published in THE PARIS REVIEW No. 21 and his first book of poems, *The Gravel Ponds*, was published this year by Andre Deutsch.

Christopher Middleton *(Poems from Herman Moon's Hourbook, News from Norwood,* and *Edward Lear in February)* teaches at King's College, London. He is well known as a translator of German fiction and poetry as well as for his own poems which have appeared in *Two Cities*, *Tomorrow*, and *The Observer*.

John Pauker *(In Solitary)* is a political commentator for The Voice of America. A former editor of *Furioso*, he has published one book of poems, *Yoked by Violence*, and has appeared previously in THE PARIS REVIEW No. 20.

Lewis Turco *(Narcissus to His Fleshly Shade)* recently recorded a selection of his poems for the Library of Congress. New poems of his are to appear in *Poetry*, *The Kenyon Review*, and other magazines.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hotel

Plaza-Athénée

25, Avenue Montaigne

Paris 8ème

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The year's most distinguished biography... The turbulent, illuminating* life of*

Thomas Wolfe

by his close friend and literary agent

Elizabeth Nowell

"The real story of a writer whose natural history had all the makings of a legend . . . an immensely valuable gathering-up of material, a fine chronicle to read, an illuminating portrait of a demonic young talent of our own period." —MAXWELL GEISMAR *front page, N. Y. Times Book Review**

"The excitement that he brought to living quivers on its every page . . . throbs with the agonies and ecstasies of a turbulent man." — JOHN MASON BROWN, *Book-of-the-Month Club News*

456 pages, $5.95 at all booksellers

DOUBLEDAY & CO. INC.
Garden City, N. Y.

SHORT STORY 3

Presenting

Burton Raffel,
Matthew Carney,
Joseph Slotkin,
Robert Creeley

Cloth $4.50
Paper $2.45

SCRIBNERS

POETS OF TODAY VII

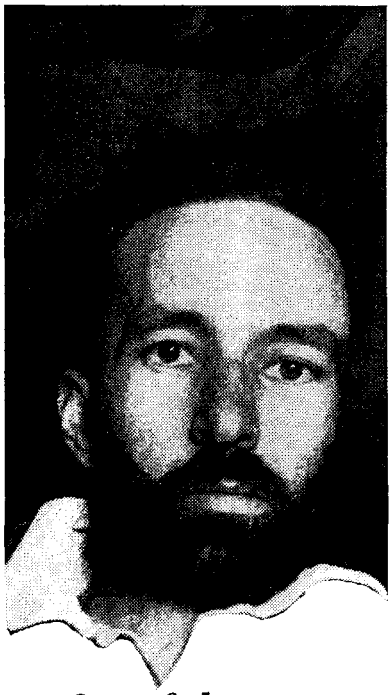
Presenting

James Dickey,
Paris Leary, Jon Swan

Selected and edited, with an introductory essay, by John Hall Wheelock.

$3.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



One of the most extraordinary minds of 20th-century France

EX-SURREALIST, Sanskrit scholar, poet, philosopher, student of Gurdjieff ... René Daumal died in 1944 at the age of 36, leaving behind this remarkable book.

MOUNT ANALOGUE is the profound ("One of the most intriguing poetic reveries of contemporary literature."—*Figaro*) and funny ("Gleams with a kind of Jacques Tati humor."—*J. B. Priestly*) tale of a strange group of pilgrims off on a journey beyond reality.

MOUNT ANALOGUE

By RENÉ DAUMAL
$3.00, now at your bookstore
PANTHEON

Two Novels

By

Vladimir Nabokov

LAUGHTER IN THE DARK

The story of a man who forsakes his wife for a young mistress. "A first-rate thriller with clever phychological trimmings..." (Clifton Fadiman, *The New Yorker*). $3.50

THE REAL LIFE OF SEBASTIAN KNIGHT

A brilliant piece of literary detection as well as a profound discussion of the problem of human identity and the artist's role in modern society. $3.50

NEW DIRECTIONS
333 SIXTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 14

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PAPERBOUND BOOKS OF ALL PUBLISHERS SHIPPED
ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

PAPERBOOK
Inc.
GALLERY

WASHINGTON SQUARE
90 West Third Street

SHERIDAN SQUARE
122½ Seventh Avenue South

Greenwich Village, New York City

SEND $.25 FOR 60 PAGE CATALOG OF PAPERBOUND
BOOKS IN PRINT

MODERN FIRST EDITIONS

Robert Frost – Always in Stock

The Usual and the Unusual

Catalogues

House of Books Ltd.
18 East 60 Street New York, New York

THE YALE SERIES
OF RECORDED POETS

Announces the following albums of poets reading their own works:
Allen Tate, Robert Lowell, Stanley Kunitz, Dudley Fitts, George Starbuck, Louis Simpson, John Crowe Ransom, Conrad Aiken, Louise Bogan, Yvor Winters, Lee Anderson, R. P. Blackmur, Marianne Moore, Robert Penn Warren, Richard Eberhart.

Each album consists of a long-playing record of the poet reading from his own works...

a critical essay by a member of the Yale Department of English...
a printed text of the poems...
a striking photograph of the poet...

Full subscription (22 albums) $95

Single records $ 5.98 plus 40c handling and mailing charge for each order

Persons who order three records at list price may choose a fourth record free
Order from: Yale Series of Recorded Poets

202 Davenport Avenue
New Haven, Conn.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE POETRY CENTER

Twenty-second season... 1960/1961... Subcription series $15.00

December

Archibald MacLeish W. H. Auden

January

A. Alvarez Joseph Langland Anthony Hecht
Richard Hugo Claire McAllister W. S. Merwin

February

Norman Mailer Russell Oberlin Edward Dorn E. E. Cummings
Robert Lowell Margaret Avison Theodore Enslin

March

Stanley Burnshaw Robert Hazel Diane Wakoski
Theodore Roethke David Ignatow Robert Fitzgerald

April

Robert Frost

For The Poetry Center Circular, telephone AT 9-2400; or write to The Poetry Center, YM/YWHA, 92nd Street and Lexington Avenue, New York 28, N.Y.

THE POETRY CENTER

YM/YWHA, 92nd Street at Lexington Ave. N.Y.C. 28

If you are interested in the arts, you can't afford not to care about the cinema.
If you care about the cinema, you can't afford not to read

SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

Recent contributions include

LINDSAY ANDERSON
JOHN BERGER
LOUISE BROOKS
JACK CLAYTON
ROBERT HAMER
ELIA KAZAN
GRIGORY KOZINTSEV
GAVIN LAMBERT
SATYAJIT RAY
TONY RICHARDSON

Published by

the British Film Institute, 164 Shaftesbury Ave., Lond WC2
American subscription enquiries to:
SIGHT AND SOUND
306 W. 11th St., N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SIXTIES

A MAGAZINE OF POETRY AND GENERAL OPINION

Thoughts in an Election Year: Leslie Fiedler is the Nixon of the literary world. John Ciardi is Jim Hagerty, and Yvor Winters is J. Edgar Hoover. J. Donald Adams is Mamie. Jacques Barzun is Chiang Kai-Chek.

The academic poetry of the last twenty years, moreover, resembles the results of the Republican Farm Policy: we now have huge surpluses of poems. These poems cannot be used to help anyone to live, however, and are stored in anthologies and libraries for which the government is paying rent. The good that could have come from the ground has been lost by determined isolationism. The Beat poetry is equally isolationist and resembles the filibusters of Senator Long.

The purpose of THE SIXTIES is to encourage development of a different kind of poetry by publishing poems of the new imagination from Europe and South America, as well as work by American poets.

EDITORS: WILLIAM DUFFY, ROBERT BLY

Please enter my subscription to THE SIXTIES at $3.00 for four issues.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... ZONE ..... STATE .....

Enter the subscription for ..... years (four issues per year).

Begin with issue # .....

I enclose $3.00 for 1 year ☐ $5.00 for two years ☐ Bill ☐

Foreign Subscriptions: 22 NF; 25/– in United Kingdom

Address: THE SIXTIES,
Odin House, Madison, Minnesota, U.S.A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BETTY PARSONS

Hedda Sterne *Kenzo Okada*

William Congdon *Ad Reinhardt*

Enrico Donati *Seymour Lipton*

Gallery at 15 East 57 NYC

Tibor de Nagy Gallery

149 E. 72th St
NEW YORK CITY

Forthcoming Exhibitions

Kanemitsu

Frank Pearson

Stephen Radich Gallery

81 Madison Ave, NYC

FIORELLO!

Pulitzer Prize 1960

Broadhurst Theatre
New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chateau Haut-Brion

Premier Grand Cru Classé 1855

PESSAC, GIRONDE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ROBERT FROST

FIRST EDITIONS

The Lone Striker. 4-page pamphlet. Illus. by Dwiggins. In orig. envelope $4.50

A Young Birch. A Christmas Card, 8-page pamphlet. Decorations by Joseph Low $4.50

'Kitty Hawk'. First book-appearance of a 14-page poem, in *Anthology of Magazine Verse for 1958* $5.95

A Masque of Reason. N.Y., 1945 $2.00

A Further Range. N.Y., 1936 $5.00

West-Running Brook. Signed, in slip-case. $20.00

ALL CURRENT TITLES in stock, incl. COLLECTED POEMS $6.00

The Dimensions of Robert Frost by Reginald L. Cook $3.95

PASTERNAK

Poems. Trans. by L. Slater, intro. by Hugh MacDiarmid. wrappers $1.25

Dr. Zhivago. De Luxe Ed., large format, over 200 extraordinary black & white illus. by A. Alexeieff $12.50

I Remember. Incl. 'Translating Shakespeare' $3.75 pap. $1.35

Poems. Trans. by Eugene M. Kayden $3.95

Poetry of Pasternak. Trans. with intro. by George Reavey $3.50 pap. $1.25

Safe Conduct pap. $1.35

'Bacchanalia,' 8-page poem, hitherto unpub., in *Columbia Review*, Winter 1959 $ .50

Pasternak: A Pictorial Biography by Gerd Ruge $5.00

GOTHAM BOOK MART

41 West 47th, New York 36, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Société Granvins

Grands Vins de Bordeaux et de Bourgogne

34, AVENUE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

PARIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Originally published in the PARIS REVIEW

Recipient of the 1959 Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship Award and now

Winner of the 1959 National Book Award for Fiction

Goodbye, Columbus

by Philip Roth

"Roth sees life with a fresh and funny eye; in the midst of the tense romance between poor boy and rich girl, one catches lampoonings of our swollen and unreal American prosperity that are observant and charming as Fitzgerald."
Alfred Kazin, The Reporter

$3.75

Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston 7, Mass.

PERIDOT GALLERY

820 Madison Ave., N.Y. 21

Announcements available on request

The Alan Gallery

766 Madison Avenue

at 66th Street

New York City

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LOVE AND LIKE

Herbert Gold. The first of Mr Gold's books to be published in Great Britain, and perhaps the best thing he has ever done: a masterly collection of stories. 16/-

NEW WORLD WRITING 16

'What we are after,' say the editors, 'is a publication which will convey a true sense of literary excitement.' That is what it has done ever since it first appeared in 1952, and what it still does. A goodlooking paperback. 10/6

THE CORAL BARRIER

Pierre Gascar. The most beautifully written and accurate novel about the white man's relations with Africa to have been written for many years. 10/6

ARE YOU HUNGRY ARE YOU COLD

Ludwig Bemelmans. An extraordinary novel, with a sharp flavour of truth, about a young French girl's rebellion against a 'privileged' upbringing. 15/-

THE GOOD THIEF

Jim Dilles. Old and new values are contrasted with great insight in this novel about Greek peasants transplanted to California. 16/-

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR: A NEW APPROACH

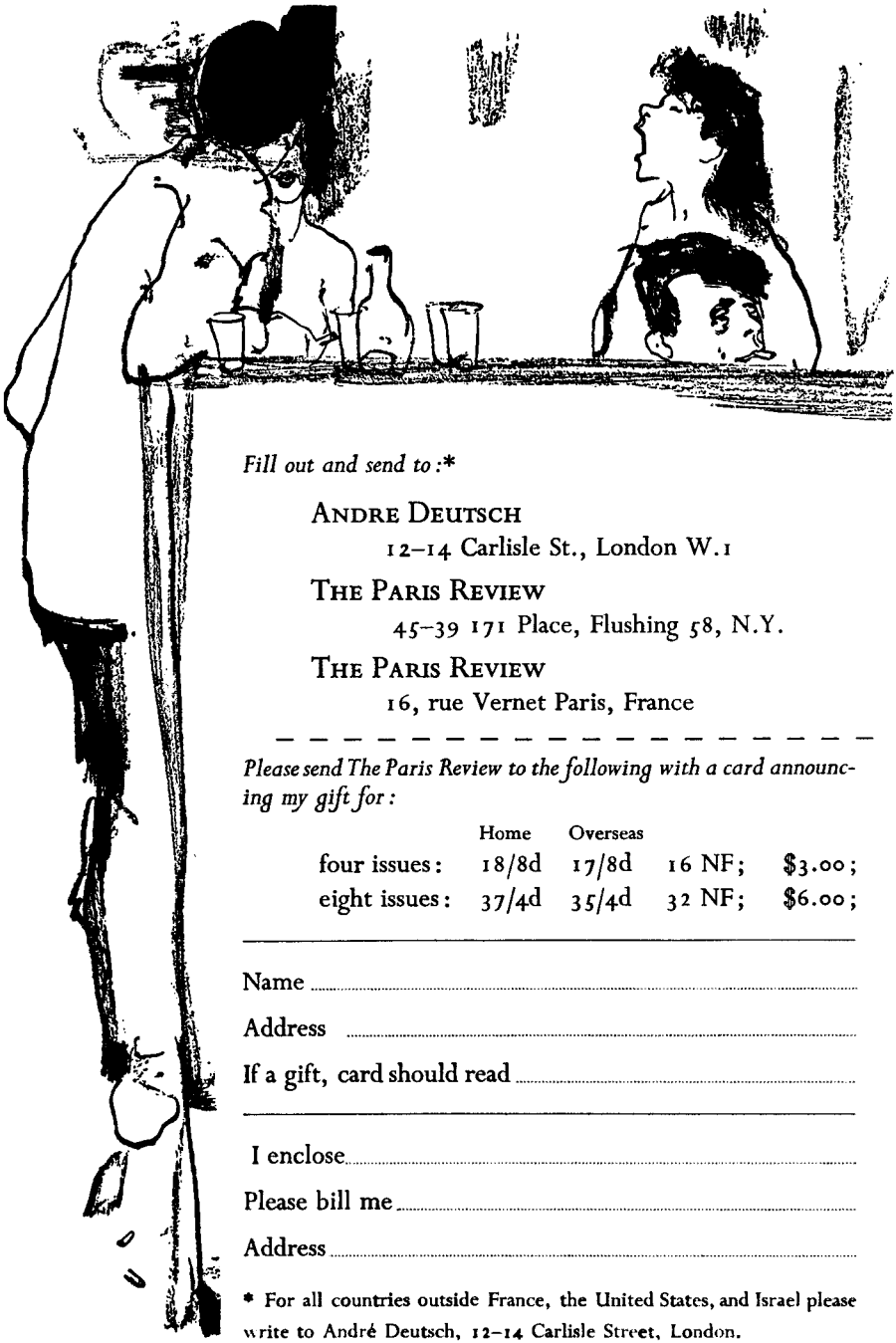
Claire and W. M. S. Russell. A detailed exposition of a revolutionary theory, by a psychoanalyst collaborating with an expert on animal behaviour. 42/-

A RING OF WILLOWS

Eric Barker A collection of poems, with an introduction by Henry Miller. 10/6

ANDRE DEUTSCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



*Fill out and send to :**

ANDRE DEUTSCH
12–14 Carlisle St., London W.1

THE PARIS REVIEW
45–39 171 Place, Flushing 58, N.Y.

THE PARIS REVIEW
16, rue Vernet Paris, France

Please send The Paris Review to the following with a card announcing my gift for :

	Home	Overseas		
four issues :	18/8d	17/8d	16 NF;	$3.00;
eight issues :	37/4d	35/4d	32 NF;	$6.00;

Name .....

Address .....

If a gift, card should read .....

I enclose .....

Please bill me .....

Address .....

* For all countries outside France, the United States, and Israel please write to André Deutsch, 12–14 Carlisle Street, London.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hotel George-V

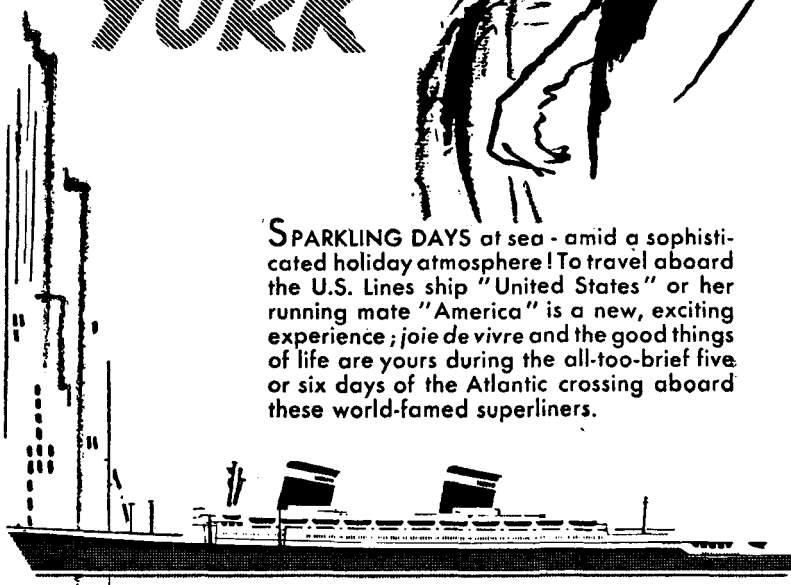
31, Avenue George-V

Paris 8ème

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW-YORK

SPARKLING DAYS at sea - amid a sophisticated holiday atmosphere! To travel aboard the U.S. Lines ship "United States" or her running mate "America" is a new, exciting experience; *joie de vivre* and the good things of life are yours during the all-too-brief five or six days of the Atlantic crossing aboard these world-famed superliners.



Consult your Travel Agent or

United States Lines

Paris Office : 10 Rue Auber. Tél. OPE. 89-80

INTERCONTINENTAL PUBLICITÉ - PARIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED